A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

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TIME AND PEOPLE

The Baikal-Amur Railway was once described by an American businessman Edward Lamb as one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken.

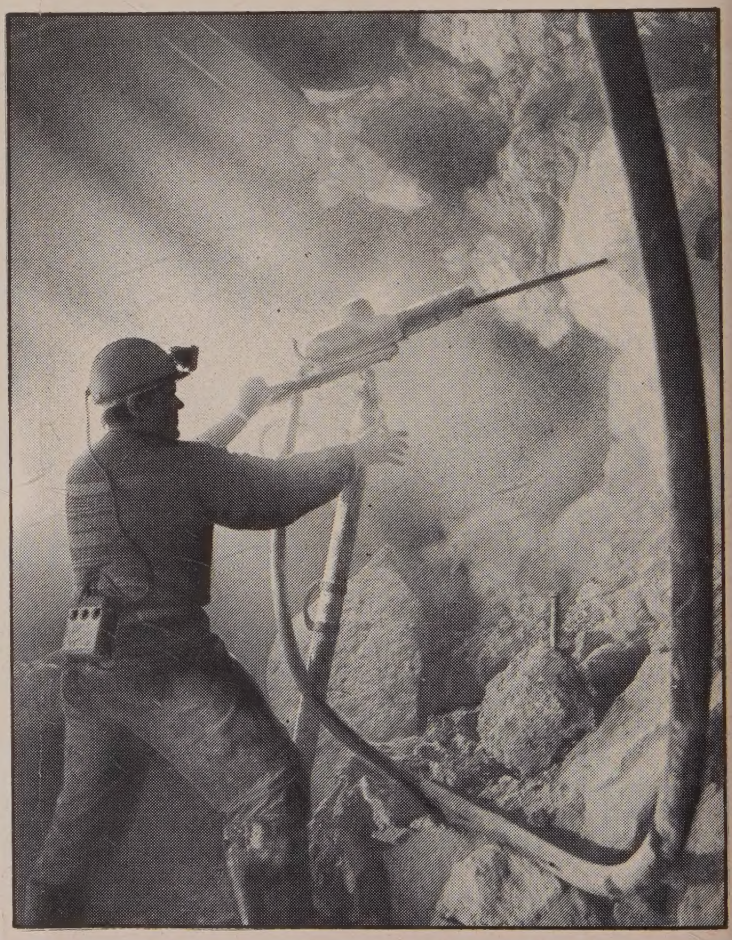
The idea of such a railway originated in 1888. The possibility of building a trans-Siberian railway along the northern, not the southern, coast of Lake Baikal was first mentioned in the studies of the Russian Technical Society's commission dealing with the construction of railways across Siberia.

The ambitious project was not forgotten. But in the early years of Soviet power the country did not have the wherewithal to carry it out. Today the Baikal-Amur Railway is a reality. The adjacent territory covers one and a half million square kilometres. Vast fuel and power resources and rich deposits of iron ore, nonferrous and precious metals, asbestos and apatite have been discovered in the area. There is a comprehensive programme for the development of the region till 1990.

Such an immense and difficult project had not been undertaken in the Soviet Union for many years. As many as 136 large bridges have been erected and eight tunnels with a total length of 32 km. have been cut along the route. The Baikal-Amur Railway was built by the entire country. Hundreds of plants in different parts of the Soviet Union delivered machines, materials and equipment to the project. During the years of construction hundreds of stations and sidings were built, and dozens of builders' townships sprang up. New towns—Tynda, Severobaikalsk and Nizhneangarsk—appeared. They have modern houses, hundreds of nurseries and kindergartens, schools, hospitals, clubs and sport facilities.

But not everything went smoothly. Scientific, design and technical errors had to be corrected in the process of developing the area. This caused extra expenditure, and disappointment among volunteers as the real state of affairs belied boastful newspaper reports. Nevertheless, the Baikal-Amur Railway has been completed and opened.

Another section of the route has been completed. The opening of the bridge across the Lena River. Cutting the Kodar tunnel.



A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

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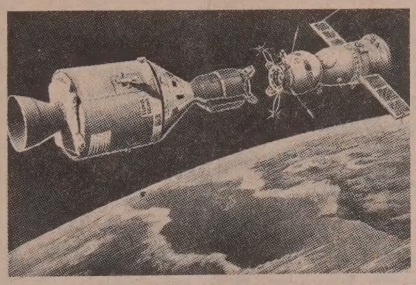

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NOT A KINDERGARTEN

Washington, December 1987. The Washington summit of December 1987 is rightly referred to as history-making. The Soviet and American leaders have paved the way for a safe future, which is still a long way off.

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FROM OUR MAILBAG

I think the socialist world does not exist by itself. It faces the capitalist system. This fact alone means that both domestic and foreign policies should be flexible. Moscow has come to realize the need for such policies. In my opinion (and in the opinion of other people too), the current policies of the Soviet government are correct and in no way contradict the principles of socialist internationalism. The policy of glasnost will favour the accelerated economic progress of the Soviet Union. We in the German Democratic Republic are also working to promote the successful advance of our state.

EDMUND KOBYLINSKI
Berlin, G.D.R.

Recently I have read not a few critical comments on the past of your country. But the Soviet Union has become what it is today thanks to its past, beginning with the revolution of 1917. I hope the planned changes will strengthen the socialist state, and not turn the system that has substantially contributed to the social progress of mankind into a "bourgeois" one.

ROBERTO LUCHETTI
Milan, Italy

Please write more about life in the Soviet Union. We in the south island of New Zealand have the most reactionary, anti-Soviet newspaper in the whole of the country. Every day we are showered with news about the Soviet Union dispatched by Reuter. Not even a quarter of these reports do give a truthful account of events.

MITZY RAPPARD
Dunedin, New Zealand

EDITORIAL

LET US MAKE POLICY

The world community is now at a crucial juncture: the question of its future is being decided. Will the arms race escalate dangerously or will mankind be able to remove the nuclear threat forever?

The Washington summmit gives grounds for saying that a real prospect of advance along the second path has at last opened. This has become possible for a number of reasons. One of them, and not the least important one, is that Moscow and Washington now understand each other better than before and have been able to overcome some of their misconceptions about each other.

Let us not try to find out who had more of such perverted misconceptions and why. It is much more pleasant to state that the old propaganda stereotypes are being eroded. Over the years the U.S. news media have created a menacing image of the Soviet Union as an "empire of evil."

Today the U.S. administration leaders say that since the intensive dialogue between Moscow and Washington began, the world has undoubtedly become a safer place to live in, and the improvement in American-Soviet relations has been and remains a contributing factor in this respect. They also say that in spite of differences between the two socio-political systems, they must and can coexist.

But in the present complex world, far from everything depends on the two great powers. The Soviet Union's relations with other capitalist countries are also important. On the way to Washington, Mikhail Gorbachev had a stopover in Britain for talks with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The dialogue between them has been conducted for some time in a frank, friendly and open manner.

In the process of Soviet-British relations, Mikhail Gorbachev noted, Mrs Thatcher's constructive stand over the past few years, in spite of natural differences between the two countries, has been extremely valuable and important. It is not just **what** we talk about that matters, but **how** we talk.

There is a hitherto little known science of imageology, which studies how peoples see each other and what they know about each other. It should be said that this science has not been well developed either in the West or, let us admit frankly, in our country.

Capitalist propaganda has been alarming the world with the "red threat," and many people in capitalist countries have succumbed to this intensive brainwashing. Other perverted images of the Soviet Union has been built too, and its policy has been distorted.

The Soviet news media have also often used primitive clichés to depict life in the non-socialist world. For instance, an image of the United States has been formed of the tragedies of homeless and unemployed people, police violence and racist persecution. There is, however, another America - enterprising, industrious, businesslike, efficient in the tackling of production problems. It is necessary to see and know all aspects of life in the United States. In particular, this is essential for finding a correct way to achieve the goals of Soviet foreign policy.

For this reason Mikhail Gorbachev's remark about arms talks seems very important: these talks, he said, should be transferred from the field of propaganda to the field of politics.

Let us make policy. It was with this desire that the Soviet leader held the talks in Washington.

WASHINGTON

AT LAST!

Our special correspondents Evgeny Andrianov and Alexander Pumpyansky report

How very little our world, torn asunder by fears and doubts, needs to be able to breathe a sigh of relief - it seems it's enough just to see two leaders talking to each other normally. People are accustomed to personifying politics, and they believe more in what they see than in what they hear. Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Washington, the very fact that he has met President Reagan - for the third time in just over two years - was a simple, easily understandable signal to all, even before any official announcement on the results of the talks, that the worst would not happen. Two great powers, the two main antagonists in modern politics, have proved to have the common sense not to take their differences to the danger line. Actually, that was evident in Geneva, and dramatically confirmed in Reykjavik. Today we can say more. The dangerous trend that had developed over the four postwar decades and could be approximately summed up as the more nuclear our age, the shorter it would be - that trend has been halted. The Soviet-American treaty on medium- and shorter-range missiles signed in Washington marks a milestone on that road.

For the first time an entire missile family is being destroyed, and not an outdated family, but on the contrary, a particularly devastating one - the pride of military technology. The military can rattle off all the advantages of this class (or even two classes) of missile: range of from 500 to 5,000 km, high accuracy, measured in metres, speed of attaining their target - a matter of minutes, before you even have time to catch your breath. But the more advantages the military list, the deeper the sigh of relief with which people greet the signing of the treaty and the more grounds for regarding it as a victory for common sense.

Missiles will be removed from the territory of nine countries. They will no longer send a shiver down the spines of all European countries, as well as some in Asia.

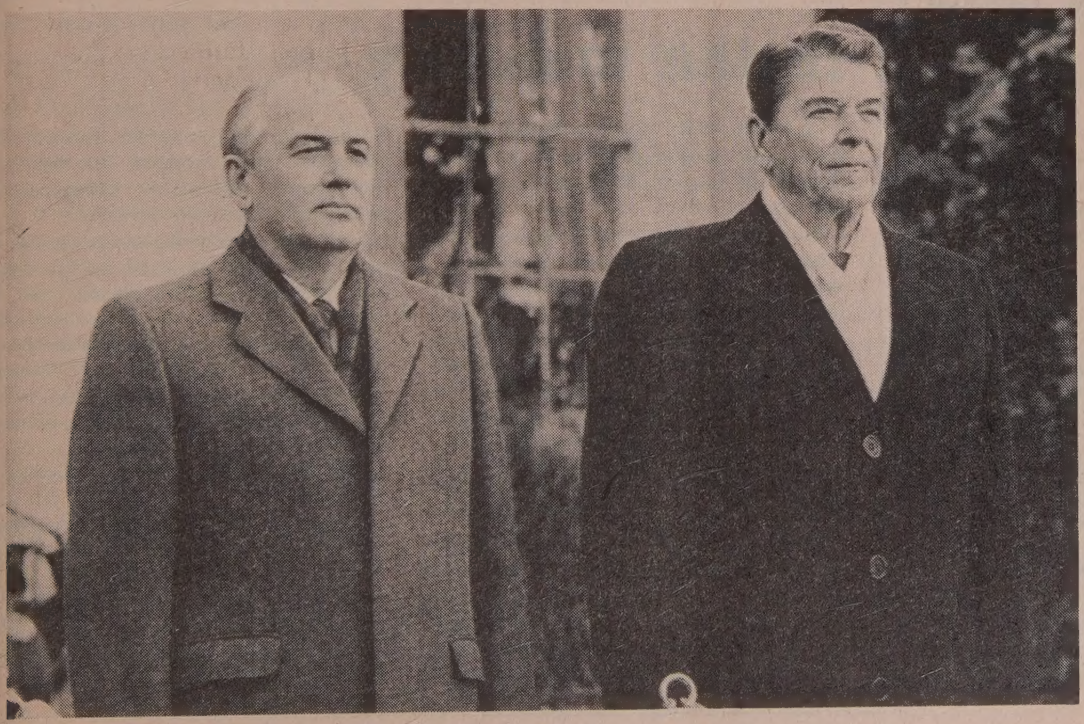
A great event usually calls for congratulations. First and foremost these should be addressed to those whose signatures stand at the bottom of the treaty - the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and the President of the United States, to the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. They displayed statesmanship, readiness to compromise, and an ability to understand the anxieties of others. But I think congratulations are also in order for another participant in the process - the peace-loving anti-nuclear movement.

The birth of a myth

Success is never an orphan. Many vie for the honour of having fathered it. In this great moment we feel little inclined to engage in polemics and allocate points. But it can't be helped, as that historic event was not even over when its history began to be re-written. This is the version given:

When in the mid-1970s the Soviet Union began deploying its SS-20 missiles, this action dramatically upset the European status quo. NATO (urged on by Jimmy Carter and Helmut Schmidt) responded with its double solution. This aroused cries of protest from the displeased and weak-nerved in the liberal West. The peace movement issued a call to its supporters to take to the streets. But the deployment of Pershings and cruises continued. In 1981 President Reagan put forward his zero option. Success was guaranteed by firmness. The present treaty, therefore, in essence, Reagan's zero option, and even those who protested in the past will have to acknowledge that President Reagan achieved much more by betting on force than they had by their unreasonable demonstrations.

That is how myths are born. Each point has been subtly altered. SS-20 missiles upset the status quo drastically? But was that the first such change since American nuclear weapons had appeared in Europe? It is true, there was one difference. For the first time the balance was tilted in the Soviet Union's favour; in all other cases it was the United States that initiated the military technological, strategic changes. But that time the Pershing-2 missiles were



The two leaders outside the White House during the welcoming ceremony.

TASS telephoto

a bit late, although work on them had started long before the NATO double option.

Was President Reagan prompted by concern for the status quo in proposing the zero option? If one has in mind the principle of not designing or deploying qualitatively new weapon systems, this had been proposed repeatedly by Moscow. The purpose was to come to a halt, not to look for new fields for the arms race. Numerous examples could be cited: missiles with multiple warheads, cruise missiles, Ohio and Typhoon submarines, and finally, America's idée fixe - a space-based ABM system....Each time Washington said No. At times they later regretted their refusal (for instance, they now regret not having agreed to a ban on missiles with multiple warheads). But behind that refusal there was always the same reason - in that field of development, the U.S. was in the lead. So why give up your advantage? In the case of medium-range missiles, we repeat, the boot was on the other foot. Hence such a generous proposal as the zero option.

It was a brilliantly demagogic proposal. The Russians would, of course, turn it down. And the Americans would, with seeming reluctance, on the grounds of having had their peaceful proposals rejected, be able to deploy their missiles in Europe. Incidentally, the zero option was born in the Pentagon, which was never a disarmament department, and Richard Perle is regarded as its direct inventor, a man who, not without grounds, enjoys the reputation of the most devious of anti-Communists and anti-Sovieteers in the Reagan-Weinberger administration. Incidentally, there is no sign that the authors of the idea were feeling particularly happy when it began to look as if it were about to be implemented. Significantly, by that time both Perle and Weinberger had left the administration and laid no claim to being toasted in champagne. They least of all had counted on their idea being taken literally.

At present some colleagues are saying that the Soviet Union made a big mistake in not accepting the zero option. This is a gross oversimplification. At its inception in 1981, the zero option was, strictly speaking, a unilateral affair. In keeping with it, the Soviet Union was to have destroyed its most recently deployed missiles, while the United States was to lose nothing at all. The obvious imparity was self-evident. Hence the firm No at the time. What has changed now? Now the Americans will also have to destroy their latest missiles.

And yet if Soviet policy had remained strictly within the confines of military logic, there would have been no agreement today. In recent years Moscow has come to realize that parity cannot be reduced to the formula "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," that policies cannot be founded solely on the functions of megatons, flight time or levels and sub-levels. That no matter what the arithmetic of deployed weapons seems to indicate, the algebra of real reductions promises far greater security. It was then that the courage was found to seek political solutions on a much greater scale. President Reagan was sent back not only his old zero option, but with additions - plus shorter-range missiles. It was that proposal that has now received the status of a treaty.

Remember the grass roots

That was the course taken by the duel, the competition - and the development of political thought. However, it did not proceed in a vacuum. By no means. Europe, the whole world was following events with bated breath. Anger and fury, eruptions of hope and the bitterness of disappointment - those were the peaks and depressions on the cardiogram of public feeling over the last few years. How can one ever forget the demonstrations of hundreds and thousands of people in Amsterdam, Bonn, London and New York? Or the peace marches? The main slogan of those marches was "No to missiles - both in the West and in the East!" They were the ones who, before Reagan, and with total sincerity and without reserve proposed a truly zero option. Their hopes were ridiculed and belittled. They certainly were, but that makes their courage and insistence all the more remarkable. In the West there's a gap between so-called big politics and the world of ordinary people, whose wishes are often ignored, manipulated, and silenced. Irony here is completely out of place; bitterness would be more appropriate. No matter how many proofs to the contrary, questions of war and peace cannot be resolved without the people. At any rate, only that policy is viable which is really and truly oriented at resolving the requirements and tasks of all of humanity.

In this case, for instance, the idea of ridding Europe of missiles came from the grass roots, from the people, and had to undergo immense stresses. But in the final count it flourished and bore fruit. It would be no exaggeration to say that in the crowded East Room of the White House, where during the signing ceremony even many journalists were unable to find footroom, a third participant in the ceremony was invisibly present - the peace movement, the real authors of the nuclear zero option.

Their presence was also plainly visible on December 5, when a big peace meeting took place in Lafayette Park outside the White House. It might not

David Pryor:

We shall be in the majority

Our talk with Senator David Pryor (Democrat, Arkansas) in his office on Capitol Hill began with a remark we did not expect.

Mr Gorbachev was not accurate in his interview with NBC newsman Tom Brokaw, said the senator. Mr Gorbachev said he had received 80,000 letters from Americans, whereas about 40,000 letters have come to my office in the past two weeks alone, inviting the General Secretary to visit the United States. These letters were sent by Arkansas schoolchildren.

Why did schoolchildren show such lively interest in the Gorbachev visit?

About a month ago, David Pryor replied, I learned of the intention of a group of Republican Congressmen to walk out of the hall if Mr Gorbachev addressed a joint session of Congress. Like many other Congressmen, I had been impatiently expecting his speech. The Americans also wanted to hear Mr Gorbachev's address in Congress. But several Congressmen objected.

Not to insult the distinguished guest, we asked for a meeting to be arranged with Congressmen, David Pryor said. At the same time, I addressed the teachers in my state, suggesting that schoolchildren write letters to Mr Gorbachev. Let them say whether they want to see him in the United States and, if they want, invite Mr Gorbachev to visit Arkansas.

Did the senator expect to receive so many letters?

I knew that there would be many letters and that most people would like to invite Mr Gorbachev, David Pryor replied. But I did not expect that there would be so many letters, and they are still coming in. The problem now is how to hand these letters to the General Secretary.

have been quite as huge or stormy as the demonstrations at the beginning of the eighties. But it followed their traditions, acting as a reminder that those who are fighting against thermonuclear powder still have powder in their own barrels. And that the treaty is not the end of the road, but the beginning.

Myths dismantled before rockets

The present treaty is a success for the new thinking, a phrase that has been used so often that it has become almost meaningless. However, it remains a fact that for the treaty to have become a possibility, both sides had to abandon some of their old views and show political and intellectual boldness. The very idea that representatives of the other side could on their first demand be given access to one's most secret places sounded like heresy even a short while ago, yet now for 13 years after the ratification of the treaty, inspection teams will have almost complete freedom of action. They will take up positions at the gates of the missile plants in Votkinsk, where the SS-20 assembly line is, and at a similar American plant in Magna, Utah. It is true that a certain disparity remains. The American inspectors will live in the town where Tchaikovsky was born, while their Soviet counterparts in a town known only for its seven bars and the same number of churches. And if you bear in mind that for our observers bars are more out of bounds than the missile plant, conditions are indeed not in their favour. But one can put up with this kind of inequality.

Because, joking aside, the idea of all-embracing control and verification is for the first time being given full rights. The state is no longer making a god of its military secrets. It is even renouncing part of what is known as its sovereignty. Why? For the sake of security.

We are beginning to understand that trust has not only to be based on strength, but that trust itself is a source of strength. That concealing military information could prove much more dangerous, since secrets breed in the other side mistrust and the wish to insure itself against danger, while openness creates trust and calm. In that sense an important precedent has been set - a new road has been opened, but we still have to travel a long way along it for the complex of direct military danger to be erased from people's minds.

In the great argument of our times as to whether a nuclear-free world is a Utopia or a possible reality, the treaty is the strongest argument in favour of the reality of such a world, if, of course, both sides have the courage to carry on the logic of this decision. Indeed, since it is possible to destroy missiles with ranges of from 500 to 5,000 km, why can't one destroy nuclear weapons with a range of less than 500 km (tactical or battlefield weapons) and more than 5,000 km (strategic weapons)? The value of such a step as destroying 3-4 per cent of nuclear arsenals, as will happen

under the agreement just concluded, would be greatly enhanced if next summer, when President Reagan visits Moscow, a treaty on a 50 per cent cut in strategic arms is signed.

Why they are against the treaty

The opponents of the treaty realized its fundamental significance immediately. The list of their concrete arguments against it is a long one:

- the treaty is to the disadvantage of the United States, and to the advantage of the Soviet Union, since Soviet medium-range missiles could not have reached targets on American territory, while American ones could have hit Soviet targets (remember the figures: the Americans will destroy 400-odd warheads, the Soviet Union about 1,500);

- the abolition of American missiles leaves Western Europe defenceless, and means decoupling West European security from that of the United States. But, in principle, the clock will be turned back to

The senator was asked whether the opponents of the Washington summit and the treaty could prevent it being ratified, as happened, for instance, to the SALT-2 treaty, or whether they would "amend" the INF treaty in a way that would make it meaningless.

I think the treaty will be ratified in the form in which it has been signed, David Pryor replied. Though I belong to the Democratic Party and our President is a Republican, I am very glad that Ronald Reagan is firmly resolved to conclude the treaty and get it ratified by Congress.

A group of conservatives declared at a press conference held a few days ago that they would campaign against the ratification of the INF treaty. Moreover, they claimed that they had the support of legislators.

The right wing in the Senate is, indeed, against the treaty, David Pryor replied. But I hope that moderate senators will join those who favour ratification, and they will be in the majority.

David Pryor was asked what he thought of the treaty.

A first step must be made some time, he replied. The treaty is just such a step. We will have a long way to go, but the first step is especially important. If control over compliance with the treaty is effective, an atmosphere of mutual trust will arise. In this way we are laying the cornerstone of the edifice of future treaties and agreements. We are experiencing a critical moment now, and we have come a very long way to reach it.

At the beginning of this year, Senator Pryor visited the Soviet Union with a group of businessmen from his state. What were the results of this trip?

About 20 leading businessmen and farrmers came with me, the senator replied. These people enjoy great influence and respect in Arkansas. As a result of the trip, we have formed a new vision and idea of the processes taking place in the Soviet Union. In the summer of this year the members of the group met to define areas of possible cooperation, especially in agriculture and the food industry.

They concluded that both sides could cooperate in these fields, exchange technologies and research findings, and regularly hold joint seminars. American businessmen can share with the Soviet side their knowhow in the fields of food industry and agriculture, and they are ready for cooperation. For instance, the owner of the large firm Don Tyson is proposing to set up joint enterprises in the Soviet Union for broiler fattening and production.

Everyone of us has a dream, his or her vision of an ideal world, of the future. The senator was asked in this connection what, in his opinion, was the optimal relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

I know that the people of our countries support the social systems under which they live, David Pryor replied. But I do not want the American and Soviet people to fear, while going to bed or waking up, that they may be killed by nuclear strikes because of differences in their social systems.

Our relations should be based on trade and economic ties. We should compete not in the field of armaments but on the markets, in business, science and other fields. This will help to raise the living standards of our peoples.

Unfortunately, for a long time we have invested huge resources in the manufacture of armaments we do not need. Since the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and this happened 15,000 days ago, David Pryor said in conclusion, we and you have been producing on average one nuclear warhead a day. Our two countries now have a minimum of 30,000 nuclear warheads. This is nonsense!

the situation that existed before the beginning of the 1980s, with one major amendment: there will no longer be any Soviet missiles....

But let's abandon the list.

The weakness and far-fetched nature of these arguments leaps to the eye. There can be nothing against the treaty as such. So it is not the treaty but its opponents who are at the root of the objections. They are against the treaty not because it is a bad one, but because it is a good one. Because they are against any treaty with the Soviet Union, as a matter of principle, against any treaty that could slow down the arms race.

The right believe they have been betrayed. How they raged on the eve of the summit! The paradox is that they believed Reagan to be their leader, their man. But worldly love can be short-lived. Today all their poison arrows are directed at him. The President should be given his due. He answered his opponents with unexpected firmness and force.

The objections we are hearing, he said, not without regret, in a TV interview, and yes, yes, from our own side, you might say from our allies and our own forces, they are based on a lack of knowledge as to what this treaty contains....

We'll leave aside for the moment the key phrase in Reagan's reply. What has happened to the 40th American President? How did he come to decide to take such a reasonable step as to sign the treaty?

We have heard plenty of different answers to those questions in Washington these past few days. "The last year" syndrome, and the "Nancy factor": nearing the end of his presidency, Reagan had to stop and think how would he go down in history. His wife very much wanted him to be remembered as a peacemaker. The lame duck factor: Irangate and other scandals, domestic defeats - all weakened the President and he badly needed a major foreign policy victory to keep his dwindling forces up. The poll factor: all the recent polls indicated one persistent trend - most Americans favoured a treaty, favoured a summit and better relations with the Soviet Union.

Does that mean Reagan has changed? We would not say that. But times have changed since he took over the presidency. The time has come for a reckoning. The conservative revolution is petering out. Reaganomics has been badly shaken, the recent stock market crash frightened many people. It showed that Reagan's simple recipes (more capitalism, more spending for defence, and to hell with everything else) had led to dangerous distortions. American society today is no longer ready to try out any kind of venture without demur. Time introduces its own changes. That, incidentally, in our opinion, is the real reason for the resignation of such faithful soldiers of the administration as Perle and Weinberger....

This article was written, but not yet sent to Moscow - in Washington it was evening and in Moscow night - when we had an encounter with Richard Perle. We met him at a reception given for Soviet journalists by a very rich lady, well disposed to the idea of Soviet-American cooperation, Esther Coopersmith at her home near Washington. It was beyond us to resist the temptation to check our impressions on Perle himself.

We learned that he was covering the summit for one of the TV stations and commenting on the signing of the treaty.

We asked him why he had resigned. In America, especially when such a question is put to well-known personality, it is not regarded as tactless. And Perle replied with that phrase so familiar from other interviews - that he wanted a change of scenery and was also thinking of writing a book.

Then he promptly came back with a question:

What did you tell your readers?

One of us fearlessly expressed the view that those happy days for the Pentagon when its merest whim was complied with were over. And so he and his chief had preferred to retire at the peak, since in the future the situation would deteriorate. What do you think of such a hypothesis, we asked.

Unexpectedly Perle agreed.

So can we say it has been authorized by you?

Perle again nodded.

Times do indeed change....

The right refuse to recognize this. They remain true to their postulates: if something is good for Moscow, it's bad for Washington; the only way to talk to

A "Peace Bridge"

MOSCOW

On the eve of the Washington summit, a live "peace bridge" linked the reception office of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet and the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Muscovites passed down the line bouquets of scarlet carnations and the Soviet public's message to Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan. At the Soviet end of the "bridge" the message was accepted by Pavel Gilashvili, Vice-President of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, and at the American end - by Stephen Pifer, First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy.

I asked some of the "bridge" partici-

The "peace bridge" in front of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

Photo by V. Panov

Moscow is not to talk to it, arms cuts are absurd, since they weaken a position of strength. In other words, their crusade continues.

From different directions

President Reagan found himself caught between two stools. The public is yearning for a display of common sense. Consciously or instinctively people want normal relations between the two giants. The public voted for a summit. But then came the mutiny on Reagan's own ship, insisting that he stick to old policies. The drums of the cold war are out in strength.

Actually, there are more than two stools. Apart from the opposition of negation, there is the opposition of agreement. On the eve of the summit, on a sunny Sunday - December 6 - Jewish organizations in the United States held an impressive demonstration outside the Capitol, the traditional place for such gatherings. The speakers did not denounce the President, they tactfully praised him. They did not denounce the summit, but hinted and imposed on the President their own agenda for it. Peace, security, arms reduction - in their version of things all these questions came second to their demand for totally unrestricted rights to emigrate from the Soviet Union. The main thing was their slogans, while questions of war and peace, the climate of Soviet-American relations and all the rest were nothing but bargaining counters, the carrot and the stick for achieving their aims. We repeat, it all sounded like loyal opposition, but in the demonstration itself, in its scale one felt the hidden threat: we can mobilize formidable forces, and if the President wants our continued support, he must act accordingly.

Yes, the White House found itself under fire from many sides. This was particularly noticeable over these past few days.

Today the President can say: We know that, if necessary, we can coexist like two boxers in the ring. But we prefer to coexist as partners and friends. (Izvestia interview, addressed, of course, to Soviet readers.) Tomorrow you might hear that a summit does not necessarily mean a meeting of friends, but could mean a meeting of old adversaries (addressed to an American audience, predominantly a conservative one). In the morning he says that our two systems - no matter how they differ - can and must coexist. But in the evening he recalls that he hasn't changed since he made his speech about the "empire of evil."

It is certainly no easy task to serve two gods at once. Of course, in each word, each action emanating from the White House one can see the wish to met different wishes, pacify different interests. For those who are not used to the salvoes of American political propaganda, these combinations are hard to take. There is no guarantee that a trend noticeable today will be carried on tomorrow. But this report is being written to record the state of affairs today.

It is time to recall the President's response to his right-wing critics. It is all the more important since it was made to people who share his way of thinking. In other words, to himself as well.

I think that some of the people who object most strongly and refuse to accept the idea of possible mutual understanding are basically those who down in their deepest hearts have accepted that war is inevitable....

We should like to congratulate the President. Without any sarcasm. It takes courage to reassess old dogmas.

The keys to American hearts

A summit - a stage for two. We have examined the Reagan factor, but what about the Gorbachev factor? That is a delicate subject. Not so long ago our journalists were the most active producers of exaggerated, and in essence, tactless descriptions when it came to the upper echelons. So inevitably you begin to doubt whether people will believe that this time it is not merely traditional praise.

So first a few words about President Reagan's interview to a pool of American TV journalists.

Dan Rather, an aggressive newsman from CBS, begun his long question by recalling something once said by Winston Churchill who had noted that trying to maintain good relations with Communists was like trying to stroke a crocodile. You were never sure that when it opened its mouth it was trying to smile or trying to swallow you. And Rather ended this story by asking the President whether he did not fear the young, energetic and intelligent Marxist-Leninist.

Let's leave aside journalistic tricks, since that is not our subject today. What impressed us much more was the general tone: the inferiority complex, so unusual for Americans. And strange as it may seem, it was dipslayed not only by the interviewer, but by the interviewee. Ronald Reagan was repeatedly asked how he would feel next to the dynamic Soviet leader, and on at least two occasions in these past few days, the President got off the hook by joking: it wouldn't matter since he, Reagan, had played with Errol Flynn in films.

For those to whom the name is unfamiliar: in his time Errol Flynn was one of the top Hollywood stars. Even in his best days Ronald Reagan did not attain his heights, but even playing in the same film was considered an honour.

Leaving aside American humour and the American way of self-expression. All public opinion polls show the truly amazing popularity of Mikhail Gorbachev with Americans. At times this is noted with a kind of despair, especially after tens of millions of Americans watched the live TV interview from the Kremlin. All attempts to reduce the impact and cast a shadow on his figure have so far proved unsuccessful. His good humour and openness are being written off as new tactics. But so far this hasn't had much effect. Perestroika and glasnost - these two words remain marvellous keys to American hearts.

Of course, Americans have a rather vague picture of what the processes at work in our country are like in reality. But that does not mean that we should not care what the world thinks of us. The possibility for achieving a breakthrough in Soviet-American relations was not simply the result of a bolder and less rigid Soviet foreign policy. That is only part of the cause. The main thing is that our domestic policy has turned towards such values as democracy and the human factors. With any other policy, the present success of the Washigton summit would have been simply impossible.

pants what they thought about the Americans.

Alexander Kazakov, a teacher:

"They are a young and vigorous nation. You can make friends with the Americans. For some reason, however, we know more about the militarization of the U.S. economy, about the jobless and homeless there, than about the life of ordinary Americans who, like us, make steel, bake bread, and bring up children."

Pyotr Kirillov, engineer:

"We have brought the art of mutual reproaches and accusations to perfection. The 'credit' for that largely goes to journalists, both Soviet and American. It's high time the stereotyped images of the other side were discarded."

On the same day, the "peace bridge" extended to Washington, where it spanned the distance between the White House and the Soviet Embassy. It was "built" by the Americans, who believe in the simple truth that whether we want it or not, we live on the same planet and must rely on our common sense rather than on missiles for survival.

K. ISAKOV

A JOINT MISSION TO MARS NEXT

VLADIMIR PRYAKHIN and
VITALY SEVASTYANOV

Is there life on Mars! This question has long haunted science fiction writers, dreamers and scientists. The answer will come easier, of course, if the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. - the world's leading space powers - combine their efforts. But what about SDI, one might ask. For "villainy and genius are incompatible." This famous phrase by Pushkin has become axiomatic....

Thomas Stafford and Alexei Leonov preparing for the joint Soviet-American flight under the Soyuz-Apollo programme (1975). Although 12 years have passed since then, it seems only a short while ago... At the time everybody hoped that this symbol of détente was only the beginning of fruitful cooperation by the two powers in peaceful space exploration. Those hopes were not realized. Can we now look to the future with optimism!

On emerging into outer space with its inexhaustible energy resources mankind has begun to feel that it is on the threshold of material abundance. Is this not human genius in its real, concrete expression? The genius of Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Sergei Korolyov, Hermann Oberth and a multitude of other theoreticians and field-workers of space exploration.

But there exists also another genius, the genius of evil. Those who are possessed by this spirit can perceive outer space only in the flashes of "star wars." Such is the outer space of Edward Teller, the "father" of the U.S. hydrogen bomb who has become a promoter of SDI. Such is outer space for the 8,000 "wunderkinder" - mathematicians, physicists, chemists and other specialists - united under the roof of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory into a mighty "brains trust" to create a potential for war in outer space and from outer space.

Payment for risk

Genius and villainy, which in the poet's words are incompatible, in reality often exist side by side within the walls of a single laboratory or political office. The research departments of the U.S. Air Force and the Navy that coordinate research in the field of SDI have concluded a contract with the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) for the development of a laser on free electrons. Under the terms of the contract, work on this new type of laser under the guidance of Samuel Penner in one of the Gaithersburg laboratories of the NBS will be completed in 1990.

When mentioning this contract, the U.S. press unanimously ignored the "main" purpose of the laser - its incorporation in the SDI system. But it put the emphasis on the 4.9 million dollars that specialists at the Harvard Medical School are getting from the Pentagon to conduct experiments which, if successful, will help find a radical means of treating one of the deadliest enemies of human health - cardiovascular disease. But what price must be paid for this? Is it really necessary for this to increase the risk of a nuclear catastrophe? And this risk will increase. In fact the deployment of automatic equipment in space will increase this risk immensely because no serious and considered political decision can be taken within fractions of a second. Mankind, however, already knows the value of automatic equipment, even of the best that we have. The Challenger shuttle was one of the latest dramatic examples. The spaceship Earth, with a crew of five billion, cannot and should not be a hostage to computers.

But how can genius and villainy be separated? How can the mighty potential of space research be directed towards the seasrch for the "elixir of life" and not for the creation of weapons of self-destruction?

The complexity of these questions should not discourage us. Just as the seeming simplicity of the answer to the question, "What is better - a peaceful outer space or a militarized one?" should not be a source of groundless optimism.

Nobody but man can provide answers to this question, because the "miraculous powers of Madonnas has waned in the face of the terrible might of man-made megatons." Man has nowhere to look for salvation but in himself.

The next step

Yet another storey has been built in the edifice of peace and security that is being erected by mankind: the leaders of the

VLADIMIR PRYAKHIN, Cand. Sc. (History), an expert of the World Federation of Scientific Workers.

VITALY SEVASTYANOV, Cand. Sc. (Technical Sciences), pilot cosmonaut of the U.S.S.R., twice Hero of the Soviet Union.

U.S.S.R. and the U.S. have signed important agreements on restricting the arms race.

The present Soviet-U.S. summit and the agreements concluded at it have, in our opinion, a characteristic feature distinguishing them from previous ones. With due regard for existing experience, both positive and negative, the sides have made a serious effort to underpin the storeys made up of political agreements with a foundation of accords on cooperation in constructive fields of human activity.

Without such a foundation, without a mutual "linkage" of the economies of our countries, without the cooperation of scientists, without greater mutual understanding and mutual knowledge the multistoried buildings consisting of political agreements alone run the risk of becoming castles built upon the quicksands of mutual incomprehension.

Cooperation in the peaceful exploration of outer space holds a special place in Soviet-U.S. relations. Its level is a sort of indicator of political will to draw closer together.

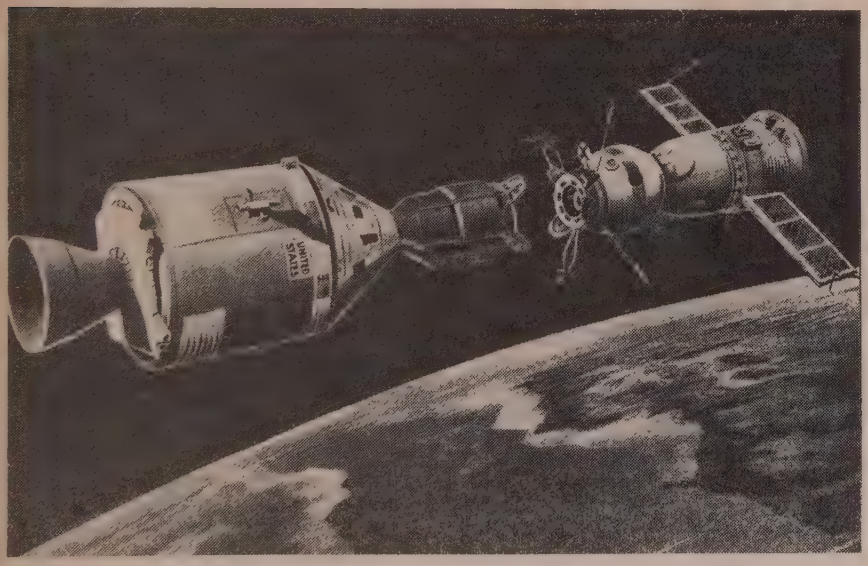
Firstly, space technology is a fairly delicate matter because of its very close connection with the strategic potentials of both countries.

Secondly, cosmonautics is oriented to the future - the 21st century. Early in this century, airmen, who were in the vanguard of scientific and technological progress, developed a feeling of fellowship in serving a common cause.

This is even more true of people united by cooperation in the peaceful exploration of outer space. With the sole difference that cosmonautics unites a much bigger circle of people than the community of the first aviators. These are engineers, designers, scientists and whole aerospace complexes. Decisions on questions of cosmonautics belong in the category of political and economic decisions of prime state importance. Hopefully, the likely joint exploration of Mars will help make it clearer that the future of mankind lies in peaceful space research rather than in the Strategic Defence Initiative.

Last but no least, the immense socially useful efficiency of cosmonautics, if one can use such a term, imparts special political importance to space cooperation. This is what the Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov said on this score: "Cosmonautics is akin to art. How? It is worked out before the eyes of millions of people. Especially now, considering the worldwide development of mass media and contacts.... And our multilingual orbital 'arks' help people see a model of genuine cooperation, mutual respect and understanding, and advance towards progress." Yuri Gagarin, too, when visiting various countries, never tired of repeating that our planet is too small for squabbles and that we should live on it in friendship.

Cosmonautics creates striking symbols of international cooperation in the eyes of millions. One such symbol was the handshake of the Soviet and American cosmonauts who took part in the joint Soyuz-Apollo space experiment in 1975. That experiment became a genuine symbol of détente, of the peaceful coexistence of two great powers.



The implementation of the Soviet-U.S. treaty on cooperation in exploring and using outer space for peaceful purposes, signed by Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz in Moscow last spring, may also produce new and vivid symbols. The treaty provides for many interesting projects in the fields of solar system studies, astronomy, astrophysics, space biology and medicine. In particular, the sides are to cooperate in looking for the most convenient prospective landing sites on Mars.

Experience refutes

By virtue of joint space experiments, cosmonautics is becoming one of the material factors of the 20th century which, to use an apt expression of Mikhail Gorbachev, make us "perceive differently the weight of national decisions when determining the destiny of civilization, the correlation of the process of cognition and ways of utlizing the achievements of science, **time and space itself"** (underlined by the authors). Maybe that is why the very idea of Soviet-U.S. cooperation in peaceful space exploration is so repugnant to those who are motivated by the "genius of evil."

In their attempts to block practical steps in this sphere they have often resorted to claims that the exchange of scientific and technological achievements is a one-way street and that the U.S.S.R. lags behind the U.S.

Experience has more than once refuted such contentions. As has been admitted by American colleagues, Soviet scientists can cooperate with them as equals, while in some areas they are even ahead. NASA, for instance, has shown great interest in the Soviet sputnik Kosmos-1870 launched on July 25, 1987. The British magazine Nature wrote that in the opinion of specialists this sputnik has an analogue in the U.S. Earth Observing System, but that that analogue will not be ready for launch until the mid-1990s.

An interest in participation in the study of Mars is being displayed by scientists in a number of countries which do not have the possibility of carrying out such a huge programme themselves in the foreseeable future. For instance, British scientists have shown very great interest in the planned expedition to Mars. On their behalf professor of physics, David Southwood, has stated readiness to take part in the Soviet space experiments in one form or other. In his conversation with Academician Roald Sagdeyev, Director of the Space Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, he outlined his views on delivering samples of Martian soil to Earth in 1996. This and other experiments will play an important role in obtaining information for carrying out a manned flight to Mars at the end of this century, New Scientist wrote.

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...Genius and villainy are incompatible. Soviet cosmonauts and American astronauts would once again prove this truth by their journey to Mars. Mankind would gain more than just pieces of ice from the bowels of Mars and "souvenirs" of a hypothetical civilization that might once have existed on that distant and mysterious planet. What the future missions are expected to bring, above all, is a new awareness of our aim in life being to save the world from the real threat of nuclear self-destruction. ■

A peace vigil in front of the White House

I arrived in Washington when summer was gradually giving way to fall, and found it hot. They told me that at the height of summer the heat was sweltering, while in winter people have to put all their warm clothes on to keep out the freezing cold. Ellen Thomas spends 16-18 hours a day on a sidewalk at the edge of Lafayette Park - opposite President Reagan, so to say. Presumably the master of the White House does not see much of Ellen, and as for the banners she has put up all around her, the slogans on them cannot be made out from his office windows. The size of these banners is confined to certain strict limits, and so is U.S. democracy in general, as the participants in the Peace Park Antinuclear Vigil have had ample occasion to see over their six-odd years of appealing to common sense and humanism day and night.

To begin with, let me tell you what Ellen, her husband William Thomas and their friends and sympathizers who have settled down in Lafayette Park with their placards and streamers, are after. I was introduced to them by a colleague, Igor Ignatyev, a TASS correspondent in Washington. Upon learning that I had taken part in the Chautauqua meeting of American and Soviet public figures, Ellen showered me with questions; she wanted to know whether they had managed to achieve better understanding and reach some sort of agreement. I answered the former question in the affirmative, and my answer to the latter question was: "You can't expect too much too soon." Ellen's interest was only natural; the participants in the Peace Park Antinuclear Vigil wanted the two leading powers to come to understand each other's policy better and to agree on nuclear disarmament by the year 2000. They called for that in a petition addressed to the U.S. Congress and the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, and signed by 16,000 Americans in 6 months alone. The participants in that unusual protest were familiar with the Soviet peace initiatives aimed at delivering mankind from the burden of nuclear arms. Therefore the calls inscribed on their placards were addressed to the U.S. administration, for the most part. They read, for instance: "Listen to Reason not to Reagan," " Renounce Genocidal Weapons," "No to Wars and Warheads."

"The future is in our hands. Freeze the nuclear arms race." I read these words on Robert Dorrough's once-blue T-shirt, which had seen better days. A tall lanky youth seated a few yards from Ellen Thomas, sporting a blond beard and a pair of worn-out denim shorts, he readily joined in the conversation. Robert had been keeping his vigil there for over four years at a stretch, almost 24 hours a day, going away only for snacks, showers and interviews with policemen or judges. He was repeatedly arrested for "camping," as his sidewalk protest was described. On more than one occasion, his stands had been smashed to smithereens.

The phrase "Humanity must rid the world of nuclear weapons, or nuclear weapons will rid the Earth of humanity" seemed an eyesore to some. Today this warning is again blazoned on a wooden stand. True, the authorities had the size reduced to four by four feet.

The rule against "camping" gave the authorities a new "weapon" against the Antinuclear Vigil which has been upholding the right to voice its concern over the fate of the world for seven years. This group of courageous men and women is opposed by the so-called park police subordinated to the Department of Interior. Special rules aimed at frustrating the round-the-clock and year-round protest were worked out. It was forbidden to put up placards on the sidewalk, or lean them against the railing in front of the White House. The Lafayette Park demonstrators were forbidden to walk further than three feet from their stands. Failure to comply entitled the arms of the law to knock down the plank-stands carrying the calls for peace.

The vague regulations against "camping" are interpreted by the authorities as they see fit. Incidentally, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled, back in 1976, that anyone on a round-the-clock vigil shall not be prosecuted if overcome by sleep.

Nevertheless, William Thomas, Concepcion Picciotto, Robert Dorrough, Ellen Thomas and some other participants in the vigil were arrested one morning while "on the watch" and taken to court in September 1984. All of them had to be acquitted as it turned out that no other breakers of the "anti-camping" rule had been arrested anywhere in Washington. (I had on several occasions witnessed the American policemen's respect for the human right to sleep on the sidewalk. Sleepers huddled against walls or stretched out right across sidewalks are to be seen in downtown New York, say on Eighth Avenue, at 7-8 every morning.)

As of now, criminal proceedings have been instituted against the participants in the Antinuclear Vigil on a number of charges. Concepcion Picciotto is charged with "storage of property" (books, a camera, leaflets); William and Ellen Thomas, with "camping"; another charge proferred against Ellen is "putting up a stationary banner on the White House sidewalk"; Robert Dorrough and John Kelly are accused of "interfering with police officer"; Lynn Fredriksson, of "demonstating without a permit" (anti-war picketing at the White House railing) and "rigging up an unlawful structure" (a plastic rain shelter).

On July 4, 1985, the participants in the Antinuclear Vigil proclaimed the part of the Lafayette Park facing Pennsylvania Avenue the Peace Park. In the Declaration of Independence from the Threat of Nuclear War it is referred to as "a nuclear free world territory governed by compassion."

In parting, Ellen asked me to sign a petition calling on the leaders of the two countries to scrap nuclear warheads by the year 2000. I replied that I preferred to put my signature to a story about the Antinuclear Vigil.

VLADIMIR ZHITOMIRSKY
our special correspondent

Photo by author

Washington-Moscow

LIKE GOOD NEIGHBOURS

For the 70th anniversary of Finland's independence

On the occasion of an anniversary, it is customary to congratulate the hero of the day and say nice things to him. All the more so if he is a life-long neighbour you've been very friendly with for the last four decades.

Appropriate speeches are indeed being made in Helsinki and Moscow as Finland marks the 70th anniversary of its national independence. The speakers naturally mention the fact that this outstanding historical event was inseparably linked with the Great October Socialist Revolution and that the signing of the relevant decree by Lenin was evidence of Soviet Russia's entirely new attitude to Finland.

At anniversary meetings one can also hear words to the effect that, having gone through a long period of mistrust and open hostility and through two armed clashes, the Soviet Union and Finland have managed to restructure their relations in such a way, on the basis of the 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, as to make them a model of good-neighbourliness today.

All this is absolutely true.

Nevertheless, let us leave formal speeches, important and meaningful as they are, to high-ranking officialdom. I should like to discuss something else here.

A year ago, a group of Soviet journalists, this author included, had a meeting in Helsinki with Finnish colleagues who showered us with questions. That was only to be expected as they wanted to know more about our perestroika, which was already off to a good start at the time. There were some reproachful questions too, and one of them somehow made a special impact on me. "Why is it," a Finnish newsman asked, "that your newspapers and magazines always look at Finland through rose-coloured spectacles? Are your readers interested solely in Finnish-Soviet cooperation and care nothing for our Finnish problems and concerns? Don't you know, perhaps, that Finland has come to be known as Western Europe's most bourgeois country? Unfortunately, you say too little about the changes going on here."

For all the categorical nature of this statement, we had to agree with it, on the whole. As I turned the Finn's words over in my mind, I couldn't help thinking of the kind of mental inertia that breeds stereotypes albeit positive ones. Such stereotypes cannot convey the full picture of reality, with all its colours and nuances. Therefore, we are indebted to the Finns.

Indeed, over the past decades our papers have been too preoccupied with enthusing over Soviet-Finnish cooperation to give a serious and penetrating analysis to the impetuous processes under way in the neighbouring country, to today's Finland. And mind you, that country which has been referred to as "wooden-legged" until recently for its heavy dependence on the export of wood, has promptly attained a high level of development surpassing, say, Britain and France in per capita incomes and winning the flattering soubriquet of the "Europoean Japan." Today Finnish companies are gaining a foothold in Western Europe and even in North America, Arto Ojala, Director of the Finnish Employers' Confederation says with justified pride.

Drawn into the objective process of the internationalization of economic links, Finland is now thinking in earnest about its future, anxious not to miss the "European express." The Finns are divided as to how to arrange their relations with the Common Market. They cherish their political independence and, besides, jumping to conclusions would be out of character. Finland seeks to take the interests of all its partners into account because trade and economic cooperation with the Soviet Union is of no small importance to it.

Obviously, the structural changes in the economy, sometimes described as the "Europeanization" of Finland, could not but have an effect on the country's life as a whole, and on public consciousness. This was demonstrated by the parliamentary elections held in the spring of 1987. The elections did not only bring cabinet posts to the National Coalition Party - the country's leading bourgeois party - for the first time in twenty years, but even put its representative at the head of the cabinet. Nevertheless, the Soviets voiced no displeasure over the appointment of Harri Holkeri, a Conservative, to the post of Prime Minister, the American paper The Christian Science Monitor stated in surprise.

What's so surprising about that? I think this phrase also comes from stereotyped preconceived notions, Western ones this time, born after Moscow and Helsinki signed the 1948 Treaty. These notions - or rather a whole theory known as "Finlandization" - boil down to the following: by signing the Treaty, Finland deliberately curtailed its sovereignty, found itself in the shadow of its mighty neighbour, who controls its foreign and home policy and its economy. The word "Finlandization" was used as a bugaboo to scare those in the West who wished to expand economic links with the Soviet Union, to conduct a more intense political dialogue, and establish friendlier and more trusting relations with Moscow.

Admittedly, our Western colleagues have largely succeeded in hammering this theory home to their fellow-citizens. It has got to the point, The Christian Science Monitor testifies, that upon coming to Finland, American visitors are surprised to see no traces of the influence of the East.

Of late, however, the term "Finlandization" has been occurring much less frequently in the Western media. It is giving way to puzzling questions: what is the secret of the Finns' prosperity, self-confidence and international prestige? How come that in Vienna, where representatives from the Helsinki Conference participating states are deliberating, Finns vigorously call on both East and West to disarm, while in Geneva the Finnish representative chairs the East-West talks on ecological problems?

Well, such questions are the most convincing denial of the "Finlandization" theory, and furnish another proof of the fact that if an independent capitalist country does not only declare for a better world situation but regularly comes up with constructive peace initiatives, this only adds to its prestige. And if, in its relations with the leading socialist power, it takes mutual political and economic interests into account, both countries - and the world - will benefit from that.

One cannot very well apply the subjunctive mood to the past. Nevertheless, Urho Kekkonen did remark, in 1963, that if the 1948 Treaty had never been signed, "the interests of Finland would have called for establishing with the Soviet Union the kind of relations which the Treaty was all about anyway."

Dmitry POGORZHELSKY

Constitution of peace and good hope

MIKHAIL KOZHUKHOV

A new name has been added to the maps of the world - the Republic of Afghanistan, a state whose political system will differ radically from the previous one. Such was the decision of the Loya Jirgah, the Afghan Great Council of People's Representatives, which adopted the country's new Constitution on November 30.

Holding jirgahs is an old tradition with the Afghans. Translated literally, jirgah means a circle or council. Since ancient times it brought together different tribes to solve the all-important questions of war and peace. In those days, jirgahs were held in the main squares of villages or towns, and continued for as long as was needed to reach a unanimous decision. This decision was binding on everybody; he who failed to abide by it was banished and his house set on fire, for this failure was considered a disgrace.

Often the Loya Jirgah - Great Council - adopted decisions important for the future of Afghanistan. The country's four previous constitutions were also approved by it.

However, for the first time in Afghan history, the discussion of the country's fundamental law was nationwide. It lasted several months and involved both members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the armed opposition. A total of 15,000 amendments and proposals were submitted for consideration by the commission to prepare the Constitution. As a result, 120 of the 137 articles of the draft document were revised; the final version contained as many as 148 articles. These figures have given Kabul grounds to say that this Constitution has been drafted by the whole country, and that the republic's new political system is essentially a system created by the whole people.

New political system

One of the key elements of the new political system is the PDPA's renunciation of its monopoly of power, which is enshrined in the Constitution. On the eve of the Loya Jirgah, four new parties were granted legal status: the Revolutionary Organization of the Working People of Afghanistan, the Organization of Afghan Working People, the Peasant Justice Party, and the People's Islamic Party. Together with the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan they will form the backbone of the interparty left-wing democratic bloc which will head both the country's future government and the National Assembly, the legislative body still to be elected.

Does this mean a retreat from the positions the PDPA has won, a revision of the gains of the April 1978 revolution?

"A retreat? On the contrary," said Suheila Saddeq, one of the 29 women participants in the Loya Jirgah, which was attended by about 1,500. A PDPA member, she is an embodiment of the changes in Afghanistan brought about by the revolution. Suheila is the first woman surgeon in the history of Afghanistan, the first woman General of the Medical Corps. The Loya Jirgah unanimously elected the General Secretary of the PDPA Central Committee, Najibullah, President of the republic, and this despite the fact that the PDPA members make up less than a quarter of jirgamars.

"The aims of the April national democratic revolution are the same," Suheila went on. "But the chief one today is to secure peace and an end to the fratricidal war. This can only be achieved by uniting all social forces, including workers and mullahs...."

Islam and the revolution constitute a special issue in Afghanistan, one which could not but find reflection in the new Constitution. This is predictable in a country where the counterrevolution is crying "Islam is in danger!", and the clergy - there are over 200,000 mullahs in Afghanistan - are an influential social force. In spite of allegations to the contrary by the critics of the April revolution, it has never aimed at separating religion from the state, which would have been simply impossible in a country where the overwhelming majority of the population are deeply religious. The new Constitution proclaims Islam to be a sacred religion of Afghanistan. Here is what Sheikh Ayatollah Sadeqi, one of the religious leaders of Hazaras (a nationality in Afghanistan) has to say.

"The holy religion of Islam has always had the respect of the state, and the new Constitution is a fitting reply to extremists who are speculating with Allah's name. On behalf of all Afghan Moslems I say: our Constitution is based on the prescriptions of the Koran and Shariat. Article 2 says in no uncertain terms: no law may be adopted in the republic that runs counter to the principles of the Islamic religion."

"The peaceful postulates of the Koran and the prestige of progressive mullahs are inalienable components of the policy of national reconciliation in Afghanistan," said newly elected President Najibullah at his first press conference. "However, the struggle of the Islamic fundamentalists against social progress finds no response among the leaders of our country...."

Nor does the republic's economic programme, enshrined in the Constitution, give any grounds for trying to paint present-day Afghanistan exclusively in red, Bolshevik colours. This programme is basically aimed at setting up an independent economy to overcome backwardness and improve the living standards of the people. While proclaiming the country's natural and key energy resources, banks and leading branches of heavy industry to be the property of the state, the Constitution at the same time provides for the development of the private sector and the inviolability of private capital investments, and for the participation of foreign capital in the country's economic projects.

This programme takes account of the economic structure of Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries in the world, where the share of the private sector in the gross national product constitutes 81 per cent, and even more in agriculture and trade.

The most important section of the Constitution deals with the civil rights of the Afghan people. "The situation with human rights has improved somewhat of late," it was admitted, albeit reluctantly, by a professor of Vienna, who visited Afghanistan this summer. And here is what one of the participants in the Loya Jirgah, the venerable Stanaqzai, an elder of a tribe in the Logar Province, had to say:

"Not one of the previous Afghan constitutions was so democratic and gave the citizens such extensive rights - from the right to live in peace to freedom of speech, conscience and the formation of political parties. When did the state ever undertake to provide jobs, free education and medical care for the Afghans? All these are enshrined in the new Constitu-

tion, which I call a "constitution of peace and good hope..."

It is indeed a constitution of peace and good hope. Peace, because the idea of national harmony is at the heart of the document. Good hope, because it is a plan of action rather than a reflection of the real situation that took shape in Afghanistan a year after the proclamation by the government of the policy of national reconciliation.

Along the uphill path of reconciliation

Implementing the policy of reconciliation has proved more difficult than was expected. So far it has been impossible to conclude that the reconciliation process is irreversible, and this is admitted in Kabul. On the one hand, thousands of yesterday's dushmans have laid down arms and hundreds of them have joined local coalition bodies of power; on the other, tens of thousands of armed bandits are continuing the bloody war. On the one hand, the government is in control of all cities and one in three villages; on the other, desertion is still in evidence in the army, as are cases of corruption - and there are not a few - among state employees. The differences within the PDPA are playing into the hands of the enemies of reconciliation. It is far from everywhere that the people have overcome distrust towards the government due to its former mistakes and extremes.

A street scene in downtown Kabul.
TASS photo

It is, however, clear that in this complex and contradictory situation the Afghan leadership is taking the initiative. Fourteen times in the course of the current year it has made proposals of cooperation to the counterrevolutionary leaders - up to and including the proposal that they nominate their candidates for presidency and establish a body of representatives in Kabul; it has suggested that they occupy a number of ministerial posts and proposed that a certain degree of autonomy be preserved in the regions where the fighting has ended.

So far no answer. Like hermits endlessly chanting the same prayer, the leaders of the seven biggest counterrevolutionary organizations, whose headquarters are in Pakistan, say over and over again: war to the last drop of blood, no compromise with the present regime. It is well known that the war "to the last Afghan" is financed entirely by the "free world," which thereby adds to the list of victims. The United States and its allies in the east and west have as yet done nothing to confirm their readiness to help settle the Afghan problem. On the contrary, at his recent meeting with the leaders of the "alliance of seven," the American President not only promised to preserve, but also to increase annual financial aid (used to buy weapons).

What was Kabul's response? The newly elected President put forward a fresh initiative concerning the settlement of the conflict. At the next round of the indirect Afghan-Pakistani talks in Geneva, which is expected to take place early next year, Afghanistan will table a proposal agreed upon with the U.S.S.R.: to withdraw Soviet troops over the 12 months following the signing of agreements that will put an end to foreign interference in Afghan affairs and provide a guarantee that it will not be resumed. Furthermore, the withdrawal could be completed sooner if the commanders of large armed formations stop military operations and undertake to observe the conditions of peace.

"As president," Najibullah said further, "I am prepared to meet the opposition leaders to discuss the vital issues of ending the war and establishing peace. Such a meeting need not necessarily take place on Afghan soil. Our joint moves towards each other and agreements to form a coalition government, solve the country's problems by political means, and end military operations will provide a reliable guarantee of a rapid completion of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. In this we see our internationalist duty to our good neighbour, the Soviet Union...."

Khost cut off

As many as 340 participants took the floor during the Loya Jirgah over the two days of its work. The speeches were different - lengthy, ironic, spirited. Passions, however, ran high in the hall of the Kabul Polytechnical Institute, where the jirgah took place, when they discussed the situation in Khost, the autonomous district which has a common border with Pakistan.

"Khost district is being subjected to an economic blockade by the rebels," said Najibullah. Every night Afghan planes airlift tons of foodstuffs there, but the food shortage is still acute. Prices have skyrocketed catastrophically, and people cannot afford to buy basic foodstuffs or find cloth to bury their dead and killed in action, as is required by Muslim rites. The government has suspended military operations to clear the road to Khost and proposed that armed detachments of Jadran tribesmen, who control the road, end the senseless bloodshed. If no answer is received in a week's time, the operation will be resumed.

The resolution on this issue, unanimously adopted by the Loya Jirgah after heated debate, was this: to ask the government to refrain for another 20 days from starting military action against the Jadran tribe and send a delegation of jirgamarans for talks with the rebels....This resolution enshrines both the spirit of the Loya Jirgah, which has just ended, and the main conclusion that is now being reached by all Afghans, namely that no problem in the country should be resolved by military means. Dialogue, compromise and coalition are the only reasonable means of settling conflicts and reconciling opposing forces.

Kabul

Tensions run high

The opposition is defying the government ◆ The President has declared a state of emergency and dissolved parliament

VLADIMIR PUCHKOV

For nearly two months Bangladesh has been shaken by stormy events. Hundreds of thousands of people, responding to the call of the opposition, have been protesting against the Ershad governnment's policy and pressing it to resign. National strikes, mass demonstrations in towns end rural areas, and clashes between protesters and the police, in which people have frequently been shot dead, have brought the dramatic confrontation between the opposition and the regime into the open. Bangladesh is on the brink of a political explosion. On November 27 the President declared a state of emergency with a view to ensuring security and the normal functioning of the economy in the riot-torn country and dissolved parliament on December 6.

The current political tension had its origin in 1983, a year after the latest military coup in March led by General Hossain Mohammad Ershad, when a widespread campaign for the restoration of democracy began to gain momentum in the country. Several political alliances have been formed. One of them comprises 15 left-wing and democratic parties, including the Communists and the bourgeois democratic Awami League, which held office in the early years of independence (from 1971 to 1975).

Another alliance, composed of seven conservative and ultra-left-wing parties, was headed by the right-wing bourgeois Nationalist Party, which governed the country from 1979 to March 1982, when it was deposed in a military coup. Later, the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami Party joined the movement for the restoration of democracy.

Initially, the opposition had little chance of success in the fight for a return to constitutional norms. The military administration relied on the 90,000-strong army, which had by then become an extremely influential political force. Taking advantage of martial law, repealed only in November 1986, Hossain Mohammad Ershad imposed his own rules of the game on the opposition. This was made possible to no small degree by, among other things, disunity of the opposition parties, though all of them campaigned for the abolition of martial law and the establishment of democracy.

The general made use of the serious discord in the opposition camp, and carried out intricate political manoeuvres to ensure his National Party, founded in 1986, dubious victory in the parliamentary election. Then he easily won the presidential election, boycotted by the opposition and, having legalized his regime through parliament, repealed martial law. To give his administration a civil image, Ershad retired from the army.

A long way to a minimum wage

The opposition was not prepared to accept such a course of events. In June of this year it was able to stir up an anti-government movement by using as a pretext the discussion of two bills in the parliament: the budget for the current financial year and the statutes of local government bodies. The draft budget submitted by the government was described by the opposition as anti-popular, and with good reason, as the government advised the people to tighten their belts by introducing taxes on some foodstuffs, garments and gas.

Payment for medical care has been raised, as have tuition fees, railway fares and the land tax. And this despite the fact that 85 per cent of the 107 million-strong population earn less than 4,000 takas* a year (with the subsistence minimum estimated at 30,000 takas), 60 per cent of the peasants are landless, and a third of all adults have no work. The protest of the overwhelming majority of the people against their hard living conditions has led to widespread support for the anti-government movement.

The other bill, providing for the inclusion of army officers in local administrative councils, also met with strong resistance, as the opposition saw in it an attempt to legalize the participation of the army in government.

Several mass strikes called by the opposition last June and July shook the country and forced the regime onto the defence, for each day of a general strike meant a loss of about 400 million takas in industry alone. The anti-government campaign was only interrupted by the disastrous flood that hit a large part of the country in July-September, causing damage estimated at a billion dollars.

The inscription on the back of this participant in the "siege of Dacca" demands the restoration of democracy. The man, photographed on November 10, is reported by the Bangladesh New Nation to have been killed by the police.

The "siege of Dacca"

In October of this year the opposition made public a campaign programme to force the resignation of Hossain Ershad. Two authoritative leaders of the opposition movement - Hasina Wazed, chairman of the Awami League and daughter of the first president of the republic, Mujibur Rahman, and Begum Khaleda Zia Rahman, president of the Nationalist Party and widow of another late head of state, Ziaur Rahman - met at the end of October after a long interval. They were able to rise above the serious discords between their parties and tried, to some extent, to overcome the disunity of the opposition.

"We urge all democratic and progressive forces, regardless of their party

*Thirty-one takas equal one U.S. dollar.

affiliation and opinion, to carry forward unitedly the movement for resignation of the Ershad government," the two leaders declared in their joint statement.

New forms of anti-government action have been adopted in addition to existing ones. Among them is the blocking of railway lines, motor ways and government and local administrative institutions. A distinctive feature of the present stage is the large-scale involvement of the peasantry, especially farm labourers, in the anti-government movement.

The culminating point of the programme was the "siege of Dacca" scheduled for November 10 - a march of thousands of people from all parts of the country to the capital, where they would surround government offices and thus paralyze their work.

However, the government did not sit idle either. Through the news media under their control, the authorities launched a campaign to discredit the opposition movement. Political opponents were subjected to repressive action. Demonstrations and rallies were banned and, in general, people were not allowed to meet in groups of more than five. In Dacca, all schools and colleges were closed. Large police units were moved to the capital, and the roads leading to it were blocked.

The police were ordered to fire without warning on those who endanger public security. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, about 1,200 opposition activists and leaders, including five members of parliament, were detained. Among them were 140 members of the Communist Party.

Nevertheless, the "siege of Dacca" took place. It erupted into violent clashes between protesters and the police in which six people were shot dead, more than a hundred injured, and about 250 arrested. Hasina Wazed and Khaleda Rahman were placed under house arrest. The weekly magazine Tide reported that, under the spurious pretext of the involvement of Communists in the violence, the authorities have decided to ban the party. True, the ban has not yet been made public, but a relevant decree could be proclaimed at any moment.

The extremists are trying to take advantage of the tense situation. They have made a number of provocative attacks, in particular against Indian offices in Bangladesh. A bomb has been exploded in the grounds of the Indian High Commissioner's Office (embassy) in Dacca, and several bombs have been hurled at the Indian consulate-general office in the port of Chittagong.

President Ershad agrees to pre-term elections.

Opposition leaders Hasina Wazed and Khaleda Rahman demand that the President step down.

No side wants to climb down

But the scale of the anti-government movement has not been reduced as a result of the repressions. On the contrary, they have strengthened the resolve of the opposition to force the government out. In November, following the "siege of Dacca," one national strike was held after another. The strikes, called for one or two days, virtually paralyzed business life in the country, for on those days shops and most factories and offices were closed, municipal and interurban transport stopped, and air traffic was frequently interrupted.

Having realized the gravity of the situation, the President sent his emissaries to Hasina Wazed and Khaleda Rahman, who were still under house arrest. He agreed to hold an early general election, provided the opposition immediately called off the protest. But the two leaders declined the offer and continue to insist that any negotiations should be preceded by the resignation of the government.

When the opposition called for a new, three-day protest strike to begin on November 29, the President issued a decree introducing, as from November 27, a state of emergency throughout the country and imposing a curfew on the big cities. Political activity of any kind was banned. Nevertheless, strikes and anti-government demonstrations are continuing in various cities.

Such actions are especially alarming in that some government officials claim that the disturbances in Bangladesh are being incited by a foreign power. One has the impression that certain quarters in Bangladesh would very much like to see the cause of the current stormy events in the machinations of outside forces.

Many observers believe that in spite of the gravity of the situation, Hossain Mohammad Ershad and his government will still be able to keep the situation under control. The army, which enjoys many privileges, is backing the regime, though it does not openly interfere in the conflict between the government and the motley opposition.

The present platform of the opposition is reduced mainly to one task - the force the resignation of Ershad. This is what unites the opposition forces. But, to all intents and purposes, they have no constructive and concrete programme to offer in the event of the government's resignation. For it is difficult to recognize the common slogan of the struggle for democratization and a better life for the people as a programme, or the rather vague and, I imagine, illusory idea of forming a neutral transition cabinet capable of holding a fair general election.

The democratic future of Bangladesh will depend to a large extent on whether the opposition is able to offer the people a clear and positive programme for development and improved living standards.

OPINIONS

The two big powers can coexist

I hear that exchanges of scholars have become extensive between the Soviet Union and the United States. This is opening up good prospects. It is true that much of the current change in your country stems from Mr Gorbachev's policy of openness, an effort to do away with old structures, and the desire to expand contacts with other countries. World peace depends on friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, and I do not doubt that Mr Gorbachev and Mr Reagan will continue to prove by their actions that the two big powers can coexist.

ISAO ASHIBA
Tokyo, Japan

FOLLOW-UP

Apropos of conservatism

In his letter to the magazine (issue 36/87) A. Nikitin drew two conclusions regarding the "supranational phenomenon" of the conservative offensive in capitalist countries. I would like to add a third one.

As the people in the East and in the Third World generally win freedom, reactionaries and in some cases fascists flee to the West. In France, for instance, veterans of the Algerian campaign and the wars in Indo-China and Lebanon were among them. Conservatives who lived in Angola, Mozambique and other colonies have come to Portugal. Moreover, many opponents of the new regimes from among the local bourgeoisie have also fled to the West.

They are dynamic and enterprising by nature, well-educated and wealthy, and this means they are influential, whether they vote or not. Since capitalism's lebensraum is shrinking, the situation will continue to deteriorate in the West, in the last bastions of reaction.

GENET,
Blois, France

A surrogate culture

Re a talk with Academician Dmitry Likhachev published in issue 31/87 under the heading "Culture: a mirror of national character."

I utterly disagree with the Academician when he says that works of art are carefully preserved in Italy. Quite the reverse, unfortunately. One often hears or reads of vandalism, the defacing of historic monuments.

Not infrequently young people are guilty of such vandalism. I think our schools could do a lot to bring culture within the reach of the young and change the attitude of the rising generation to it.

I regret to say that schools do practically nothing in this respect, while the consumer society breeds only a substitute for culture.

ANGELO GIOVANNOULI
Imola, Italy

A prominent thinker of our time

In the mid-1960s I lived and worked in Cuba. During that time I repeatedly saw Ché Guevara and listened to his speeches. It was then that I felt interest in this legendary man. I still remember well the shock caused by the news of his tragic death.

Working on my Candidate's dissertation, studied all of Guevara's works published in Cuba and articles written about him in his home country as well as in the Soviet Union and elsewhere.

I have now returned to the same subject in connection with work on my thesis for a doctor's degree. I want to examine, in particular, the role of Ernesto Guevara as a great thinker of our time, who made a contribution to Marxist theory, especially in the field of philosophy and political economy.

I fully agree with the evaluation of Guevara given in Vladimir Mironov's article, "A revolutionary by calling," published in issue 43/87. It contains more material and gives a deeper analysis than a whole monograph could provide with a different approach to the subject.

I would like to congratulate the author on this undoubted success and to add that in my thesis I shall refer to a number of points in the article as an example of a correct and objective assessment of Ché Guevara as a personality.

VALERY IVANOV
Ivanovo, U.S.S.R.

TAKING UP A POINT

JERZY KRASZEWSKI, a Polish publicist, chief of Trybuna Ludu's Moscow office, replies:

The above letter touches upon one our economy's gravest problems. Inde Poland has run up a large debt to capita countries, and this is now a heavy burd on us.

Before I delve into the essence of problem, however, I should like to certain figures. Since 1971, Poland obt ned long- and middle-term credits fr capitalist countries to a total of 46.9 bill dollars. Towards the end of 1985 we turned to creditors 39.8 billion dol (interest included), with only a few lions left unpaid. Unfortunately, whole credit-granting mechanism and inexorable logic of compound intre have landed Poland in a situation wh as of late 1986, it has owed capit countries 33.5 billion dollars. This const tes nearly 40 per cent of our an national income and exceeds our h currency earnings from export to the W fivefold. Today our foreign debt amo to 36 billion U.S. dollars.

Why did we borrow from the We all, you may ask, and how did Pol come to find itself in the debt no

In the early 1970s, our country practically no financial obligations to West. At the time our policy was accelerate economic progress thro a more active involvement in the inte tional division of labour, proceeding

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The Warsaw paper Trybuna Ludu flabbergasted its readers with a report that Poland had borrowed nearly 47 billion dollars from the West. The Polish government appears to have made a severe error in doing so since it seems to be hindering plans for developing a balanced economy due to Poland having to devote too much attention to its export.

DANNY BARKER
Dorset, Britain

Why we did it

premise that the Polish economy (like economies of the other socialist untries) was part of the world economy d could not develop in isolation.

Generally speaking, borrowing is consired normal practice in the modern orld. Machines, equipment and most chnologies are, as a rule, sold on credit. w pay in cash today - this is unprofiole. Therefore, an active credit policy as to be a factor in Poland's accelerated owth.

I'd like to stress here that in the early 70s Poland was not a poor country that eded special aid. Though ravaged by orld War II and the nazi occupation, our onomy was reconstructed rather ickly. Poland's steel output grew almost)-fold, in its coal output fivefold over ewar figures. We built up industries hich had not existed in Poland before 939 - engineering, electrical engiering, chemical and others. We largely wed all this to cooperation with fraternal ocialist countries.

Here are just a few statistics. The .S.S.R. helped Poland build anew, raise self from the ruins and modernize about 50 major industrial plants and other stallations, which now account for 57, 5 and 26 per cent respectively of our teel, iron and electric energy output. Moreover, the Soviet Union meets almost 00 per cent of our oil, natural gas, iron re and cotton requirements.

Nevertheless, we had it rather hard. Owing to the truly monstrous wartime destruction and backwardness inherited om the capitalist system (pre-1939 Poland was an agrarian country with a primitive agriculture), economically we still lagged way behind other socialist countries. It was decided, therefore, to try and speed up the development of certain industries by expanding our cooperation based on an active credit policy with Western companies. We believed that we were dealing with reputable partners.

The political climate which then obtained was favourable to that move. Inflation in capitalist countries was running high and growing at a rate exceeding that of interest on credits. Credits were said to be "cheap" there, and Western states, banks and companies readily lent us money.

Many of the credits we obtained there on a compensation basis (i.e., to be repaid with the products of newly built factories) proved most useful to Polish industry - the automotive and consumer goods industries, in particular.

Unfortunately, the buildup of a strong and competitive export sector proved a much more difficult matter than it had been originally presumed to be. We never succeeded in creating an export-oriented economic structure. Why? The reasons for that merit a special discussion....In the meantime, credits kept mounting, and our export to industrialized capitalist countries failed to keep pace with their growth.

At the end of the 1970s and through the early 1980s the international situation deteriorated. The West abandoned the idea of détente and tried, increasingly frequently, to use economic levers to bring political pressure to bear on socialist countries. Loan interest rates jumped from 5-6 per cent in the early 1970s to 15-20 in 1980-81. The ways in which these loans were used in our country are worthy of special note.

A third of the money we borrowed went into importing machines and equipment; another third, into importing raw materials and feedstock; and the rest, into importing grain, fodder and other food products. Such an import structure was one of the factors behind the difficulties that arose after 1981. It was then that a considerable proportion of the Polish industry came to depend on the supply of raw materials, standard equipment and spares from the capitalist world. The West was almost our only source of molybdenum ore and concentrates, copper foil, aluminium, lead and zinc-plated sheets, lead, manganese oxide, cobalt and zinc. Many Polish industries depended, technically and technologically on Western partners who, as it turned out, failed to observe their international commitment. The result was the partial paralysis of our industry in 1981.

At that time our debt constituted 25 billion dollars, and repaying it wouldn't have been much of a problem under normal circumstances. At that time, however (and here we come to the root causes of the strain on our balance of payments), the U.S. and its allies imposed economic sanctions against our country. They wanted to "punish" us for dealing with our domestic problems on our own instead of submitting ourselves to Washington's political demands. As a result, the West scrapped - in gross violation of elementary international legal provisions - its previous agreements with us on the delivery of raw materials and equipment on credit. The ensuing material damage is still making itself felt. Economists estimate it at about 15 billion dollars, and Poland is demanding, with good reason, that this damage be compensated for.

After the West tried to tighten the debt noose, the socialist countries - especially the Soviet Union - offered Poland extra internationalist aid (i.e., on top of long-term bilateral agreements). It enabled us to weather the hard times.

Nevertheless, we wish to promote normal economic relations based on the principles of equality and sovereignty, with the capitalist countries as well. ■

Drawing by A. Groshev

Not by money alone

Professor NIKOLAI SHMELYOV answers questions from New Times

Your recent article opening with the words "The state of our economy satisfies no one" came as a revelation to our Soviet and subsequently to our foreign readership. Do you think you have been able to say what nobody had ever spelled out previously?

I am not breaking any new ground in the theory of political economy. The model we're trying out now was devised by Lenin, even if for more primitive conditions. The conditions have become more complicated, but the ideology of socialism, of what I would call rational socialism, which generates and stimulates technological progress in every way rather than rejects it, is in itself nothing new! Only tragic circumstances made us veer from that course.

When did that happen?

When the NEP (New Economic Policy) began to be dismantled. Until then Lenin's model of a socialist economy had been doing its job. We had had a balanced, scarcity-free economy motivating people through incentives. All we're doing now is reinstating Lenin's legacy which experience had regrettably forced us to abandon. There are explanations for this. But to explain is not always to justify.

The foreign mass media have shown enhanced interest in your article.

That's right. It's been reprinted in the United States, Europe, Japan and Australia and, as far as I know, touched off a lively discussion.

There is a saying: "When your opponents praise you, you should ask yourself where you've gone wrong."

There has been some extreme commentary, especially in the U.S. and Britain. But the people who make it are engaging in wishful thinking. Only the narrow-minded see me as a "restorer of capitalism." By and large, I have been understood correctly as appealing to common sense and wishing my country well.

Why have you tackled this range of problems? You are, after all, an expert in a different field.

That's not quite so. I've worked at three academic institutions - three years at the Institute of Economics, which is concerned exclusively with the Soviet economy, and twenty years at the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, where I had to deal with subjects ranging all the way from the Soviet Union to China. And it is only for the past five years that I have been at the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences' Institute of U.S.A. and Canada Studies. And even so, the favourite joke of our director there, Academician Georgy Arbatov, is that we aren't an institute of U.S. studies, we're an institute of Soviet studies.... So I've covered the economics of socialist countries, the economics of developing nations, Western theories of economic growth, the United States, world economy, and international economic relations.

But officials in charge of our economic development at local level have not studied all these disciplines....

That's not essential. What we're talking about doesn't call for any grounding in theory. It only requires the common sense not to commit absurdities and not to do anything that is not profitable or not rational.

The main slogan today, then, should be the word "profitable!"

Effective. Profitable and effective.

Recently you formulated your guiding principle for judging things in so many words: "What is not effective is immoral." This suggests the question of the level at which this immorality originates.

That's a serious question. It would, of course, be wrong to accuse a pattern maker or fitter working on an absurd assignment of doing an immoral job. He is not to blame, just as some land reclamation personnel aren't to blame when their work causes damage to the environment. But I would go higher up to the director of the institute responsible for such assignments and to the land reclamation minister to ask them about the morality of the work done by the people subordinate to them. Do they understand what they are doing? So identifying a specific carrier of immorality is not easy. But it is possible, if there's a will.

With a ground swell of cooperative and individual labour projects, the incomes of some of the population will grow substantially. How will they be able to spend their new affluence?

For a long time to come we shall continue to face the question of what to do with the money we earn because all too often there's nothing we can spend it on. People would like to buy boots and furniture or, if it's in the village, bricks and slates. But they can't just come and get what they want! They have to stand in queues and they have to "scrounge around" for everything. This is why money works so poorly. The quantity and especially the choice of goods on sale do not correspond to the amount of money the people have. And the customers today will no longer buy shoddy products. We now have, after all, two generations that have grown up aware, even if vaguely, even if by hearsay, of what quality standards are in the world.

The people are known to have more than 200 billion rubles stashed away at present on accounts at saving banks....

I do not see anything wrong, for example, in a scheme where our factories and co-ops would begin issuing shares and placing them with the public. Really, people then, given a choice, would be able to invest their savings in a business, and the idea is nothing new. It is already being tested in Hungary and Yugoslavia and has become widespread practice in China. So why shouldn't our factories issue shares and bonds as well? These could also be bought by other enterprises happening to have money to spare at a particular moment. Or would it be better for these funds to remain idle?

How does it all look in practice?

Take, for example, the Chinese experience. A metal-making plant wants to expand and modernize its facilities, but neither its own capital nor a bank loan are enough for the purpose. So it issues, say, a billion yuans' worth of shares. And they are bought up right away. The stockholders are now fully-fledged co-owners of that plant. There is, however, a restriction in China: managerial staff and party leaders are not supposed to purchase shares. Well, those are their specifics, but the principle is clear. It's clear and reasonable. Why should money lie dead when it can work, build and bring benefits to the state, socialism and individuals?

But then, the stockholders will be able somehow to influence the enterprise's operations?

Just so, and it will be a form of democratic control.

But won't elements of exploitation characteristic of capitalism also emerge at such enterprises?

Our press, alas, has succeeded in cultivating clichés. What do elements of exploitation have to do with this? They have an assembly line there and we have an assembly line here. Only for some reason we describe theirs as a sweatshop, while never giving this description to ours.

While the operating principle is the same?

The principle is one: rationalization. There are, of course, speed limits, but these should be monitored by the unions. However, if an assembly line is moving rather than standing still, and people are working rather than having one cigarette break after another, is there anything alarming in that? We have too many economic sectors and areas suffering manpower shortages. And yet we use labour so inefficiently. We assign three workers to a job which can be done by one. I've already written about how unacceptably underutilized our equipment and capacities are. It's obvious, though, that this cannot go on under a pay-your-own-way system. The whole of our service industry is in an embryonic state and individual enterprise and cooperative ventures are catching on only too slowly. But it should not be forgotten that we bulldozed those sectors for decades and weaned people away from them. It will now take time to make people believe that things have changed irreversibly and that the government will no longer suppress bona fide entrepreneurs, but encourage them.

Are there any guarantees that the economic restructuring will catch on?

I would like to make the following main point:

We have not yet been able to make broad sections of the public really aware that we do not have any alternative, that we really were in a pre-crisis state and that, if the economy does not embark on thorough-going and drastic reform, we shall only be able to delay the crisis. It will be a fairly short time, however, before it hits us.... There is no alternative because we have tried everything else. Even the opponents of the restructuring drive cannot suggest anything other than lifeless torpor. Restructuring is the only working hypothesis, the only working proposal that can shake the country out of economic dormancy. How can society be stirred up, how can be people induced to work creatively and conscientiously? I do not see any stimuli other than the ideas underlying our reform.

But the guarantees that the economic reform will be irreversible do not, of course, reside exclusively in our having no choice. The principal guarantee is in the improved atmosphere in the nation's entire political and cultural life, in the return to common sense, and increasing democratization and public openness. People are beginning to change radically as they shed the feeling of humility and helplessness. And people can't act to their own detriment, unless they are compelled to do so by forces beyond their control.

Interviewer OLGA POPKOVA

SERVICE SPHERE

Welcome to the Meihua

Moscow's lovers of Chinese cuisine had two occasions to celebrate early in November 1987: a long anticipated event - the re-opening of the Peking Restaurant after repairs,and a pleasant surprise - the emergence of a small cooperative restaurant called the Meihua. The Meihua was opened by Olga Osipova, a Chinese-language teacher until recently and now the head of a family cooperative. Chinese by birth, she left China for the Soviet Union in the early sixties and settled in Kirghizia together with her parents and four brothers and sister. She lived in Frunze at first, and later moved to Moscow where she took up a teaching job at a boarding school.

"Frankly, I'm rather nervous," Olga told me on the restaurant opening day. "After all, only a few Muscovites are familiar with real Chinese cooking."

"Arent't you afraid of competition on the part of the Peking?"

"I hope we'll stand up to it by keeping our standards high. We'll offer our customers really home-cooked dishes - joint efforts by myself, my husband, children and relatives. Are two Chinese restaurants too many for a city like Moscow? Paris has dozens of them...."

What can seven members of a cooperative do? They have repaired the rooms themselves and decorated them in traditional Chinese style (incidentally, a decorative screen and a number of other elements of interior decoration were supplied by the sponsors of the P.R.C. Trade and Industrial Exhibition); found the necessary equipment, and arranged for the spices and condiments to be delivered from Central Asia, as much of what is required for Chinese cuisine is not to be found in Moscow for love or money.

EVGENY VERLIN

Photo by V. Panov

Give the lady a hand

NINEL MASLOVA AND ELVIRA NOVIKOVA

Lenin's words about cooks that should learn to run the country date back to the dawn of the Soviet state. They aroused great interest, and a far from equivocal response. Reactions ranged from hope and trust to glee and ridicule, and they also included doubts as to the possibility of putting such a slogan into effect.

To that Lenin replied: "We are not Utopians. We know that no unskilled worker or cook can immediately take over the reins of government." But "the main, fundamental point of Bolshevism and the Russian October revolution is that it draws into politics those who were the most oppressed under capitalism." Lenin was confident that "...among women workers and peasants there were many more people than we knew about **with talents for organizing,** capable of getting practical tasks moving...."

The leader of the revolution, in this case, as in the case of other problems, visualized both sides of the problem simultaneously - **what** its solution would mean to the individual, and **what** it would mean for society as a whole. He was aware of the parameters of time.

Weaver, spinner, seamstress, knitter are prestigious professions, say these students at a Georgian vocational school.
TASS photo

It was that approach that gave a long-term view to seemingly ordinary advice and recommendations. It was not only the nobility that came so naturally to Russian intellectuals or their humanism that served as the basis for Lenin's interpretation of the "women's problem," but the sober appraisal of a statesman who realized that without drawing women into productive labour and political life, without tearing them away from "the kitchen stove, there could be **no** real freedom, **nor** could there be democracy, let alone socialism."

That makes it all the more strange when today, in the middle of some argument or other, one suddenly hears that women should be returned to their homes, in order to strengthen the family and regain their femininity.

But, for a start, do women want to be returned to their homes, do they want to give up their jobs? Sociological surveys indicate that the vast majority do not (it's another matter that some women would like to have a shorter working day, but are unable to because of the administration's attitude and inflexibility). And they don't want to give up their jobs because they regard their professional work as a means of self-realization and spiritual development, as the economic and human basis of their independence (and the family always needs their earnings), but also because it is only at work, in a collective, that women obtain reliable and full information on society and the times they live in. It should not be forgotten that it falls to the mother's lot to answer all the questions of "modern" children. She has to be an authority on everything in their eyes, not only the keeper of the home and the provider of food.

In a number of recent statements, one hears one and the same suggestion: why not increase the load on men, and increase their earnings? Then women can return to the hearth. Does that make sense? Not if you bear in mind that a child needs his father, and not just his mother, both to bring him up and as a companion, one who participates in family life, not just enjoys its benefits.

It is in the family that a child learns the basic principles of justice, how to behave with other people, how to care for others. This shapes the citizenship qualities of an individual - solidarity with those against whom an injury has been committed, or who are weaker, thoughtfulness, a sense of duty, the need to make words and deeds coincide. It is sometimes thought that if you lecture and nag at a child, you are bringing him up. That is an outmoded notion. The personal example one sets is what is decisive.

Not for nothing, according to Clara Zetkin, did Lenin scathingly criticize those who at home kept to the old views and habits, the old prejudices.

What society would stand to lose both economically and socially if women left the field of social production becomes clear when we recall another important remark made by the leader of the revolution: "...the cause begun by the Soviet government can be advanced only when millions upon millions of women throughout Russia, not mere hundreds, are involved. Then, we feel sure, the cause of socialist construction will be consolidated." The Soviet government has remained faithful to that behest.

Women in this country today are well-educated (of every thousand working women, 882 have either a higher or special secondary education). In their mass they are involved in professional work - about 92 per cent of women of able-bodied age either have jobs or study. They are active in the public and

political spheres (women make up about 30 per cent of Communist Party membership, more than 50 per cent of the membership of trade unions, the YCL, and the Soviet Peace Fund). In Soviet years, millions of women have been elected to the Soviets of Peoples' Deputies at all levels. Today they hold 33 per cent of the seats in the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, and more than half the seats in the local Soviets.

But can it be said that these excellent facts and figures give a full picture of the position of women in our society?

Of course, not.

Just one figure will serve as an illustration: 275 billion man-hours are spent on work in the home each year in the country, chiefly because of the poor development of the services industry. That is, about 90 per cent of the working time spent on work in the national economy as a whole. And the lion's share of that house work and the time it takes falls on the shoulders of women. As for the various household goods that could make such work easier they are not only far from attaining world standards, but are unavailable: either there are far too few of them, or they are far too expensive.

What does the double load carried by women - at work and in the home - entail? It not only requires spending much greater physical energy, but it also reduces very greatly a woman's free time, the time she needs so badly to bring up her children properly and for her own cultural and professional advancement. It is those factors, we are firmly convinced, that make it essential that scientists from all fields should draw up together as quickly as possible a comprehensive programme of social and economic measures to make the woman's lot easier.

Such a programme should plainly introduce corrections into the existing disproportions and imbalances in this field. Specifically, the development of socio-economic and demographic processes should be brought into agreement (according to experts' assessments, in order to obtain a normal birth rate, the proportion of women not engaged in social production should amount to 14-15 per cent, not 8 per cent as at present); ensuring that women who have to stop work to give birth to babies and then take care of them should during this period have the opportunities to continue their labour activities, for example, through raising their qualifications. Modern production makes this absolutely essential. Higher qualifications will ensure the competence that will make it not only possible but essential for the wider promotion of women to top jobs in different fields of the national economy. This would also solve the problem of increasing their earnings.

On average, about 40 per cent of men working in industry have highly paid qualifications - 5th-6th grade, while the figure for women is just 10 per cent. And in some industries even lower.

At the present stage of our perestroika and economic reform, enterprises have the right to plan and resolve social issues independently. And they can share out available funds for these purposes according to the priorities they themselves set. That includes the provision of preschool institutions (kindergartens and nurseries), a bigger contribution to providing and improving services, greater help to families (especially, young families). It is in this sphere that women's councils and trade union organizations should display greater energy, initiative, organization and control.

When drafting a comprehensive programme, it would probably be wise to take into account both the positive and the negative experience of other socialist countries in resolving the burning issues of the position of women in society.

Perestroika leaves no one indifferent, as evidenced by the sharp rise in newspaper and magazine subscription sales towards the end of 1987. Many of the subscribers are women, known to be avid readers.
TASS photo

The man's lot in our minds is usually connected with strength, boldness, the ability to stand up for oneself and one's family, as well as to defend those who are weaker, to make concessions, a sense of humour and a balanced mind.

And what about women? Isn't the present interpretation of the concept of femininity rather outdated? Perhaps it should be broadened to take in the realities of our times? Perhaps we are on the threshold of new thinking on women's problems? One thing is clear: their problems could be resolved in the context of our overall social problems, including the evolution of social consciousness.

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Pines between sleepers

From our special correspondent
ALEXEI BUKALOV

As befits good hosts, our Korean colleagues spared no effort to give us Soviet journalists every opportunity of seeing the beauties and sights of their country. We can fully endorse the words of our famous compatriot Nikolai Garin-Mikhailovsky, writer and traveller, who wrote in 1898: "In all my travels there wasn't a single case when a Korean failed to keep his word. One can reiterate again and again all the virtues of the gentle people of this nation.... I have no doubt that anyone who shares their company will love them as we did."

In the descriptions provided by our Pyongyang friends, the symbol of a magic dragon appeared frequently. When drawing up the itinerary of our trip they included Kumgang-san - the Diamond Mountains with the famous Kuryong - Nine Dragons - Falls.Having made the ascent to the Falls with hundreds of other tourists, we realized that at least five of the nine dragons were resting, because instead of a thunderous wall of water we saw a thin transparent stream that seemed to support the cliffs like a crystal pillar. Probably it was here that the medieval Korean poet, the most prominent figure in the Lake school, Yun Son-do, wrote his famous verses, translated into Russian by the poetess Anna Akhmatova:

"'Tis said the colour of the clouds is beautiful,
But some of them are black.
'Tis said the wind's voice is clear and strong,
But sometimes it is silent.
So in our world 'tis only the waters
That are always clear and flowing...."

Having filled the lake, the water courses down a canyon in the Diamond Mountains.

The stone hoop

Our route next lay towards the southernmost end of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, towards the ancient Korean capital of Kaesong. Leaving the railway station we passed Buddhist temples and former royal palaces, and then the new districts along the Tongil Road bringing us to the highway leading to the military demarcation line and the settlement of Punmunjom. It was there that the cease-fire agreement was signed in 1953, putting an official end to the bloody war in Korea.

Poster issued by the Preparatory Committee of the 13th World Youth and Student Festival to be held in North Korea in 1989.

For 8 km the highway runs through the famous Kaeson ginseng plantations, and fields sown to rice and corn. In front of the entrance to the four-kilometre demilitarized zone stands a pavillion. We were shown the table on which the agreement was signed. Next to it is a small museum with documents and other articles describing the three terrible years of war. One photograph probably illustrates the tragedy of a divided nation more strikingly than whole volumes on the history of the war. Young pines have grown between the sleepers of the railway line that once linked the North with the South.

Lee Han Sup, our guide, a captain in the Korean People's Army, explained the present disposition of the thousands of American nuclear warheads on South Korean territory. It is probably the most nuclear-saturated area in the Asian-Pacific region.

From a platform high in the hills we were able to see the wall that snakes its way along the South Korean side of the demarcation line. That concrete wall was clearly visible against the background of autumn foliage. It stands 5 metres high and is 10 metres wide at its base, embracing the Korean peninsula like a hoop from west to east. The wall stretches for 240 kilometres, with only one break - at the "oasis of coexistence," as the zone of joint defence at Punmunjom was once called.

From the southern side loudspeakers blared military marches, and through our binoculars we could clearly see the posters on the stands facing north just in front of the wall. Most of them were in Korean-colourful advertisements for cars, brothels and all the other attributes of the "good life." The biggest poster carried a symbol familiar to all: five coloured rings and the words in English: "Welcome to the Seoul Olympics."

Olympic dragon

Our guide commented: "That is a provocative insult. The Seoul regime has no right to hold the 1988 Olympic Games on its own."

Pre-Olympic fever is now at its height. Where will the 1988 summer Games be held? To which city will the torch lighted at Mt. Olympus be brought? Sportsmen and sports fans the world over want to know the answers to these questions.

According to the Eastern calendar, 1988 is the year of the Dragon. Predictably, the Koreans promptly turned it into the Olympic Dragon.

You will remember that the crisis in the modern Olympic Games first erupted back in 1976; when a number of African countries boycotted the Games in Montreal. Since then, each of the summer Games has been a subject of bitter politcal rather than sporting competition. Unfortunately, this tradition continues, as is evident from the decision of the International Olympic Committee to hold the 1988 Games in Seoul. At best it is a controversial decision adopted by the IOC without due regard for the political situation in Korea.

The situation is well known to the whole world: a divided country, and no political

stability in the South. Under these circumstances, one can hardly describe the IOC decision as being in keeping with the principles of the Olympic Charter. A recent report on the subject of a U.S. council on international relations published in New York described the decision to hold the Olympic Games in Seoul as a very sore point in relations between the two Koreas. One South Korean opposition leader Kim Young Sam even drew a comparison between the holding of the 1988 Games under the dictatorship in the South with the 1936 Games in Hitler's Germany.

The government and the National Olympic Committee in the D.P.R.K. suggested that the Games be sponsored jointly, with some of the events taking place in Pyongyang. Despite the numerous meetings and talks in Lausanne and Panmunjom, no compromise has so far been reached. On September 17, exactly a year before the official opening of the Games, the IOC sent out official invitations to Seoul to 167 countries.

In Pyongyang we were told that the IOC's decision works objectively towards perpetuating the partition of the Korean peninsula, and runs counter to the ideas of the world Olympic movement. The main argument advanced in making the decision was that Seoul has all the necessary sports facilities, which, it must be admitted, was confirmed by the Asian Games recently held there.

But Pyongyang has equally substantial arguments in its favour.

Kwangbok Avenue

The restaurant tower at the top of the 40-storey Koryo Hotel rotates slowly. From here on a sunny day one can see all the beauties of Pyongyang in its setting of parks and gardens.

The Chairman of the City Building Committee Choi Daek Soow, pointed to the mass of cranes in the southwest suburb of the city. It is the biggest construction site in the capital today, where a new wide thoroughfare, Kwangbok (Liberation) Avenue is now being built. A few figures cited by our guide: the whole area of the new neighbourhood is over 18 million square metres - and four million of these are now being built up. Right next to the 6 km-long street, on which houses with 25,000 flats are going up, is the Angol sports village. It is to include football grounds, a 30-storey youth hostel, nine modern sports centres for handball, table tennis, wrestling, boxing, two kinds of gymnastics, badminton, weight-lifting, basketball and volleyball, as well as indoor track-and-field facilities, and an indoor swimming pool. And also in the vicinity recreational facilities are being built for athletes, along with various service establishments, a clinic, restaurants and cinemas.

Builders are also busy in other parts of the city. Two stadiums are being built on two islands in the Taedong River - one on Rungnado (seating 150,000) and one on Yanggakdo (seating 30,000). What's more, Choi Daek Soow added, all the sports facilities of the Angol Village are at the finishing stage. He listed other projects under construction. These included an international communications centre, a 105-storey hotel in the centre of the city, Pyongyang international airport, and 40 other hotels in different parts of town.

On Kwangbok Avenue alone, it is proposed to open 4 Underground stations, build 5 traffic interchanges and 7 underpasses.

All these new undertakings, the architect explained, are designed chiefly for the participants and guests at the 13th World Youth and Student Festival planned for 1989. But since the sports installations will be completed by next September, they could, in principle, be used for the 24th Olympic Games.

Work on Kwangbok Avenue continues round the clock, in three shifts. The country's different regions have assumed patronage over the individual projects, and the building workers are competing for the best results in honour of the coming 15th anniversary of the Socialist Constitution. In the lead at present, we were told by Um Kie Woo, an official at the construction headquarters, are the builders from Hwanghae Province, who are putting the finishing touches to the handball stadium.

As far as sports facilities go, everything is in order. But the achievements of the Pyongyang builders seem to have had little effect as yet on the decision as to where the next Olympic Games should be held. The road to the Olympic capital lies through politics, through agreement between North and South.

The official position was stated by the Chairman of the D.P.R.K.'s Olympic Committee, Kim Yu Soon, at a press conference for foreign newsmen in Pyongyang. He said that the question of the joint holding of the Olympic Games cannot be resolved as long as the present dictatorship exists in South Korea. The D.P.R.K.'s Olympic Committee suggests that further talks on the issue be held after the coming presidential elections in South Korea.

Contenders for the Blue House

The elections have been fixed for December 16. In keeping with the new Constitution, the President will for the first time be elected by a direct vote. There are four main contenders: the leader of the ruling Democratic Justice Party, ex-General Ro Tae Woo (who also in the past chaired the Olympic Preparatory Committee), opposition leaders Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, who have never succeeded in joining forces to advance their common cause, and former South Korean Prime Minister Kim Chong Pil.

The main issue on which the election campaign is being fought is the need to improve the state of the South Korean economy. The country's external debt by the end of last year amounted to 44,500 million dollars, the fourth biggest in the world after Brazil, Mexico and Argentina.

But, of course, the attitude of each of the contenders to the peaceful reunification of Korea comes first. The proposal put forward by the government of the D.P.R.K. to form a confederated Koryo state on the peninsula (see N.T., No. 23/87) met with a wide public response in South Korea. Typical comments by the leaders of the Association of Seoul Universities were published in the press. "Reunification should be the ultimate goal, above everything else, above ideology, religion, everything," journalists were told. "It should be based on the sense of a common destiny." Another student said: "We believe North Korea wants peaceful reunification, and if the American troops are withdrawn, we shall have the chance to resolve this problem." A third view: "The North Koreans are people like ourselves and they can do us no harm." Student organizations take very radical views. They are the instigators of the anti-government actions in South Korea. (Last year alone 23,111 students were expelled from South Korean universities and colleges for their part in protest actions.)

It should also be stressed that the North Korean government's decision unilaterally to cut its army by 100,000 men by the end of this year was likewise well received by wide sections of the South Korean population.

On the other hand, as the Olympic year draws closer, the command of American forces in South Korea is stepping up its activities. At present 41,000 American officers and men are stationed in the country. Their commander-in-chief also

Policemen on guard at the Olympic stadium in Seoul.
Photo from Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)

heads the joint American-South Korean military command. Former American ambassador to Seoul William Gleysteen has pointed out that South Korea's position is extremely difficult, as its armed forces are under foreign operational control and for the Koreans this is a factor in their dependence and is also a cause for discontent.

Under the pretext of ensuring security during the coming Olympic Games, it is proposed to build up the American presence, and specifically station a large number of vessels from the U.S. Pacific Fleet in South Korean coastal waters. But the sincerity of the intentions of the American allies is doubted even by such tested friends as the present South Korean dictator Chun Doo Hwan. A short while ago he aroused the indignation of American officials by hinting that the real purpose of the American military presence in South Korea is not the defence of South Korea from an invasion from the North, but to safeguard American strategic interests.

The battle for the Blue House (as the President's office in Seoul is called) is entering its decisive phase. More and more people are gathering for the street meetings, and clashes between contenders are becoming increasingly bitter.

Meanwhile Pyongyang is busy with its gigantic construction programme. Palaces and hotels are mushrooming in the sports village.

North Korea's readiness to welcome the Olympic athletes is a sign of its peaceful intentions and good will. It could also be the starting point for a new stage in the reduction of tension on the Korean peninsula. All Koreans should have a common home, a home made warm and comfortable not by a fire-breathing dragon, but by cooperation and mutual understanding.

Pyongyang - Moscow

Realism prevails

LEONID KUZNETSOV

The heads of state and government of six countries - members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) - are to meet in Manila in mid-December. The summit atmosphere is already in the air. The hosts experienced considerable anxiety in the course of preparations because doubts had often been voiced as to whether they would be able to ensure the normal work of the summit and whether the lives of the guests would not be imperilled.

Such doubts were voiced in particular by the Indonesian newspaper Pikiran Rakyat. "The Corazon Aquino government has as yet been unable to punish the persons involved in the coup attempt," it observed. "Discontent in the armed forces continues to grow, and the split in the government is widening. The rebels are stepping up their military operations. A new coup attempt is possible."

What worries Manila

Far from all the sins imputed by Pikiran Rakyat to the Philippines administration can be accepted as true. But with regard to its doubts, the newspaper is unquestionably right. To the above-mentioned troubles of Manila should be added the machinations of overseas hawks, who are using ultra-right elements as their local agents, and growing mass discontent caused by the delay in carrying out the promised reforms, especially the agrarian reform.

The situation on the Philippine archipelago is thus complex indeed, but not, I think, to the extent of making it impossible to hold a summit in Manila, the third in the 20-year history of ASEAN. At the same time, there are no grounds either for confidence that nothing may happen. In any case, the Aquino government has bought five armoured vehicles for heads of delegations and formed special army and police units of over 10,000 men to protect the participants in the summit.

It seems, that the dominant feeling with which the leaders of the six nations will meet can be judged from a recent statement by Raul Manglapus, the Philippines' new Foreign Minister. "The security of Southeast Asia," he said, "depends not on the presence of military alliances there, but on the national resolve of each country taken separately. The Philippines is loyal to its commitments before ASEAN, which considers neutrality the main strategy of security in Southeast Asia."

This statement by the foreign minister of the Philippines is especially significant, as one of the principal sources of danger to the "national resolve" of developing states in the region, to the policy of neutrality and non-alignment, is situated precisely on the territory of that country. It comes from the large U.S. military bases stationed there.

When the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was set up in 1967, different opinions were expressed as to the purpose of this alliance. Some thought it to be a new military bloc. It will be recalled that in those years the United States was stepping up its aggression in Vietnam. But the policy documents of the organization clearly state that one of its chief aims is to accelerate the economic growth and cultural development of the member countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. Brunei joined the organization in 1984, after it had gained independence.

In this way the first step was taken. The dream of the people of the region for a better life was recorded in an official international document. It was necessary to advance further.

The springs of unity

The ASEAN countries, whose population totals 300 million, supply the world market with 80 per cent of its natural rubber, 75 per cent of its valuable tropical wood, 67 per cent of its tin, 65 per cent of its coconuts, and 60 per cent of its palm oil. They account for a large proportion of the world's output of oil, nickel, bauxite, rice, sugar and coffee.

The awareness of this fact instils a feeling of pride in the hearts of Malaysians, Filipinos, Indonesians, Thais, Singaporeans and Bruneians and helps overcome the inferiority complex spread by colonialsm. They feel to some extent that they are citizens of a large power called ASEAN. But the most important source that feeds the centripetal forces is the desire jointly to overcome their economic and cultural backwardness and consolidate their political independence.

In what fields is ASEAN active as an organization? Extensive work is being done by its standing committees dealing with multilateral regional cooperation in the fields of transport, communications, civil aircraft, meteorology, food, science and technology, finances and news media. Particularly successful is cooperation in

the realm of culture. The ASEAN countries are also jointly building, albeit slowly, industrial enterprises of various kinds.

Intra-ASEAN affairs usually take their normal course up to a certain point, a certain stage. But then comes a moment when they slow down, encountering resistance and outside pressure. In such cases an additional impulse should be given to the organization's activity.

For instance, not long ago local newspapers reported with great satisfaction that Indonesia and Malaysia had agreed to put an end to piracy in the Strait of Malacca and make it a "silk lane" where captains will not have to give the command "to arms" on seeing approaching lights and states will not have to protect the fish resources from foreign plunderers, and where, at last, people will be able to bathe without fear of getting out of the water covered in fuel oil.

Another question arose in this connection. Can the strait be rid of pirates and terrorists and pollution without simultaneously ridding its ports of encroachment by transnational corporations and, more importantly, of the foreign military presence? Newspapers concluded that the two tasks are virtually inseparable.

The militarist lasso

Under the pretence of defending the sea lanes from the "Soviet military threat," the strategists of neoglobalism and the advocates of power politics are hindering the implementation of the practical measures needed by Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries in the region for the consolidation of their economic and political independence.

The imperialists are whipping up tensions in Southeast Asia and the Asian-Pacific region as a whole, dangerously polluting the political atmosphere in the area. The solution of ASEAN's economic problems is therefore being impeded by extraneous factors.

American, Japanese, Australian and West European companies are seeking to expand their positions in Southeast Asia, an area rich in raw materials and manpower resources, though their presence is conspicuous enough as it is. Two-thirds of ASEAN's trade is conducted with the United States, Japan and the EEC countries, which are making increasing use of the mechanism of this organization.

Several meetings have recently been held under the auspices of ASEAN between Western businessmen and representatives of the organization as a whole and businessmen in each country separately. A curious method of conducting its affairs has evolved in the association. It is expressed by a "six minus x" formula, meaning that ASEAN must adopt its decisions unanimously, though each of its six members can individually refrain from fulfilling them.

The West skilfully uses this gentleman's agreement as a loophole. For instance, ASEAN expresses its solidarity with the Arab people of Palestine and denounces Zionism. At the same time, Singapore is clearly seeking to expand ties with the Zionists, as is evidenced by a recent visit of the Israeli President to that country.

Financial and industrial interests hope that the number of countries taking an "x" stand will increase, and that ASEAN will

eventually become a fiction. But this has not happened. For this reason the West, especially the United States, is trying to tie the association in what it considers the tightest noose - a militarist lasso. Attempts of this kind are meeting with resistance, though some circles in the association are quite willing to place themselves under the control of the military-industrial complex of the United States and its allies.

Nevertheless, the forces opposed to the conversion of the association into a military bloc predominate in the ruling circles of the ASEAN states. Some fear that the drawing of ASEAN into the arms race will slow down the economic progress of the member countries. The deterioration in living conditions and the growth of unemployment and prices are fraught with the risk of an explosion of discontent. Others believe with reason that involving the ASEAN states in a military bloc of the NATO type will deprive them of political independence and freedom of political choice.

There is also the elementary fear of becoming a victim of nuclear war. Anti-nuclear sentiments in Southeast Asia are very strong today. An anti-nuclear clause has even been included in the Constitution adopted in the Philippines this year.

Searching for new approaches

One of the authors of a book on economics, politics and security in Southeast Asia in the 1980s (a collection of articles put out by the University of California) notes the growing understanding by ASEAN of the fact that confrontation with the socialist nations of Indochina is inimical to the interests of the Southeast Asian countries.

A similar approach is primarily characteristic of Indonesia and Malaysia, which favour a "flexible policy" towards Vietnam and are calling on the other members of the six to treat the interests of their socialist neighbours with "greater understanding."

This author was recently invited by St. Thomas University in Manila to give a lecture on "Vladivostok and peace in Southeast Asia." The detailed account of Soviet foreign-policy initiatives, in particular the initiatives concerning the Asian-Pacific region, was followed by a discussion chaired by Prof. Jose Lapus. Summing up the discussion, he pointed to Mikhail Gorbachev's call to give up the old thinking and stereotyped approaches to problems.

This call has evoked a keen response. For instance, the big Filipino employer, V. Sycip, who is considered a spokesman for ASEAN's business community, publicly stressed the need for the association to take into account the interests of both the Soviet Union and the United States. It was not a traditional approach on his part, as previously only the interests of the United States were mentioned.

An interesting observation has been made by the above-mentioned Prof. Jose Lapus. The favourable response in the ASEAN countries to the Soviet leader's initiative has, contrary to the expectations of many, raised the policy of the association itself to a higher, truly international plane, he said. ASEAN has suddenly seen itself not as a small group on the fringes of world politics but as a fully-fledged, important and responsible participant in the system of international relations, a participant on whom, as on others, the question of whether "star wars" become a reality, whether mankind survives or disappears, will ultimately depend.

Potential for peace, reason and good will

YURI ZHILIN, well-known Soviet expert on the problems of the international working-class movement, is interviewed by New Times

New Times: Now that a little over a month has passed since the meeting of representatives of the parties and movements attending the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, what can you say about the significance of the meeting?

Yuri Zhilin: Looking at it from different angles, one can distinguish different aspects of the meeting, and all are important. As he closed the meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev described it as "unique," and as evidence that "we have entered a new period."

N.T.: What is unique about it?

Y.Z.: In the first place, it was the broadest, most representative international forum at political level in the entire history of the working-class and liberation movements.

It was not just a question of the number of parties and movements attending - and there were 178 of them from 120 countries. What was even more significant, to my mind, was the political diversity of the progressive forces represented: 100 Communist parties, 29 Socialist, Social Democratic and Labour parties, some 40 revolutionary democratic, national democratic and liberation movements and such political forces as the Indian National Congress, the Centre Party from Finland and the Greens from the Federal Republic of Germany.

Parties so different in their ideological views and their political stands on a number of issues had not got together ever before. There had been fairly representative international theoretical conferences involving those parties earlier and there were some afterwards. But the left-wing movement had never known a political meeting of that kind.

N.T.: You're talking about the make-up of the meeting. What would you say about its significance from the standpoint of the ideas voiced there?

Y.Z.: I'd say that there were exceptionally many ideas put forward there, and major ones at that. They were most wide-ranging, and concerned many urgent problems of the present-day world. Various, in a number of cases dissimilar, views were expressed. But despite the diversity of political convictions, which was, of course, a function of the very composition of the forum, the speeches there were keynoted by common concern for the fate of the world and civilization and by readiness to engage in further dialogue and to start or consolidate interaction, in spite of the ideological differences.

N.T.: Can this be understood to mean that the salient feature of the meeting was not so much the diversity of ideas as their likeness?

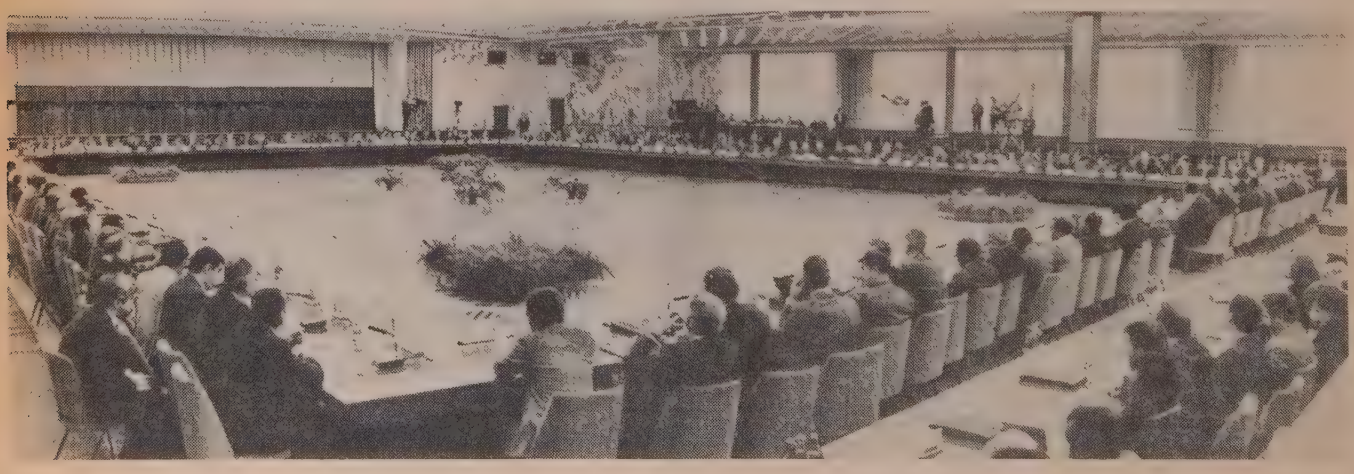
Y.Z.: I think the most interesting thing was the combination of both. There were different notes sounded at the meeting, but one can still speak of a general tenor. This is all the more significant as there was no fixed agenda and had been no preliminary work on any joint document and there was no "main" or "introductory" report. Many of those present were sitting down at the same table for the first time. Many of them had the experience of rivalry rather than cooperation. This notwithstanding, the meeting did not develop into a confrontation, but was used instead to compare opinions, show a respectful attitude to each other and, what is more - and I should like to stress this - demonstrate new views on the nature of the relationships between different trends in the working-class movement.

Many purely theoretical questions were posed as well.

N.T.: Could you also say a few words about the meeting's significance from the practical point of view?

Y.Z.: I should say first of all that there were a number of major practical proposals made there, which, if implemented, would be of no small significance.

A representative of the Belgian (Flemish) Socialists, Joseph Wynincky, for example, suggested on behalf of his party the idea of holding a multilateral conference of the Socialist and Communist



Moscow, November 1987. A meeting of representatives of the parties and movements that attended the festivities to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

TASS photo

parties of Europe "to discuss the important tasks we have to fulfil towards the end of the century to secure peace and socialism for coming generations." Representatives of a number of Communist and Social Democratic parties of the Nordic countries proposed a package of activities devoted to the problems of their region. Their own proposals were also made by representatives of Communist and Revolutionary Democratic Parties and national liberation movements from other parts of the world. All these initiatives, I think, will be a subject of consideration and practical work on the part of other parties taking an interest in them.

The main thing in practical terms was the qualitative shift - on a multilateral and very broad basis - in the progress of dialogue between the principal trends in the working-class movement, between the working-class movement and national democratic forces, and between other political forces that are linking their activities with the interests of peace and social progress.

N.T.: Can it be said that all these forces were represented at the meeting?

Y.Z.: What can be called the world of contemporary progressive forces is so multifarious and broadly-based that it can hardly be covered in general by any single function. Not all the parties grouped in the Socialist International, for example, attended the meeting.

N.T.: What was the CPSU's role in conducting the meeting?

Y.Z.: To begin with, the CPSU had taken the initiative of holding such a meeting. One can even say that it had had the courage to take that initiative, considering the complex situation in the international working-class movement in general and in the Communist movement in particular, the existence of different views and approaches to international meetings of different parties, and their guarded and even critical attitudes to each other. And that initiative was crowned with a success that reflected important changes in the world situation, public opinion and progressive political tendencies.

It should also be said that the CPSU, as the sponsoring party, promoted the democratic conditions for the exercise of complete freedom of opinion at the meeting and helped create a comradely atmosphere in a spirit of equality and mutual respect.

Finally, I believe it to have been of no small, or perhaps, indeed, of prime significance also that both in the report devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, and at the meeting itself, the CPSU put forward a package of ideas that attracted general interest, sounded most timely, dealt with the very acute and complex problems of present-day international affairs, and were in some aspects clearly consonant with the considerations of other attending parties.

N.T.: The meeting was also the occasion for tactful criticism of the CPSU, by, for example, some Social Democratic parties. Do we accept this criticism?

Y.Z.: I'd like to begin with a general observation. In my opinion, it is useful for us Soviet Communists to know how we are seen by others, irrespective of whether or not their view coincides with our own. Then, it should be stressed that we heard not only criticism, but also very definite positive comments about our policy of perestroika, as well as support for our foreign policy initiatives.

Speaking of the critical remarks proper, one can divide them into different groups. A number of considerations voiced by comrades from Socialist International parties concerned problems which, incidentally, are a subject of our own reflections and were in tune with our own understanding of the need to resolve them in the process of renovating socialism which we have initiated. I think the time has passed when we could confine ourselves to contending that we knew our problems better than anybody else and that to talk about them was therefore to interfere in our internal affairs. It is perfectly obvious, of course, that we do know our problems better, but it is useful for others to be aware of them, too. But to enable them to get a better idea of our problems, it is not enough for us alone to talk about them. If we want to be heard, we should ourselves listen to others and take heed of what they say.

Getting back to the essence of the question, obviously some of the remarks cannot be agreed with. But many arguments should be given thought rather than rejected out of hand. When, for instance, Social Democrats speak of their commitment to the "Western system of values," it is quite unnecessary to counter immediately with the self-evident truth that we are wholly committed to our own system of values and shall not abandon it. Moreover, let us also reflect on what a "Western system of values" is. My view is that the Social Democrats and the Conservatives differ considerably on this score, and these differences are rather important from the standpoint of the interests of the working class in Western countries. I believe that on many such issues Communists and Social Democrats in those countries can find common ground and that they do indeed sometimes find it over a range of issues.

I should like to make another comment. The so-called Western system of values comprises not only what has been born of the bourgeois nature of the democracy dominant there, but also what has been created by decades of working-class campaigning for workers' rights, the pressure of the working-class movement on ruling quarters, and even the gains of that movement, which, although they do not go beyond the bounds of the capitalist system, are at the same time most essential from the point of view of both the immediate interests of the working class and prospects for advances to its ultimate goals. Such values cannot be alien to us.

Finally, dialogue presupposes an exchange of ideas, a comparison of ideas and a clash of ideas. The meeting has not removed disagreements, but it has removed the barriers. And once the barriers have been removed, it turns out that along with disagreements, there is also much in common in understanding the pressing problems of the times.

N.T.: Can it be said that the meeting has laid the ground for overcoming the split in the working-class movement?

Y.Z.: Let's first agree on what we mean by overcoming the split. It would be utopianism to think that it can be bridged in the foreseeable future by way of an organizational and political merger of different working-class parties and, looking at it from a broader angle, other democratic forces. But their cooperation and interaction on principles of full equality and with account taken of their mutual interests are quite possible and, moreover, essential. The meeting has imparted an impulse to this process. How fast, widely and fruitfully it will proceed will depend on a host of factors. This process is not predetermined by fate. It depends on the initiative, efforts and contribution of each of the parties, which together form a potential for peace, reason and good will.

One can say that in this sense as well, the meeting has turned over a new leaf in the history of international left-wing forces. Practice will fill it in with vivid colours.

N.T.: Still, what in general outline are the long-term implications of the event we have discussed here?

Y.Z.: All progressive forces want to end the policy of confrontation between states. But if they wish to contribute to this cause, they can not remain stuck fast on positions of confrontation in their own ranks. Can they call for the fostering of an atmosphere of trust in the international arena without starting to cultivate one amongst themselves? Can they urge that the new mode of thinking be put into effect without demonstrating an example of new thinking in relations among themselves? It is the forces of social progress that are called upon to become the generators and catalysts of planetwide, humanitywide awareness. They could thus come forward as a weighty factor in realizing the idea of global cooperation. At the same time, they will immeasurably increase their influence on the course of world develolpment and enhance their own positions in efforts towards the social and political renewal of the world and humanizing international relations. ■

The art renaissance in China today

SERGEI TOROPTSEV

There was a snowfall in the last days of autumn, a surprise for the people of Peking. Even in winter the weather in Peking is mostly dry and sunny, with occasional sandstorms.

Autumn in Peking has subdued colours. Even the leaves of the maples on the slopes of mountains are not flame-coloured but dull red. Autumn is a time for leisurely walks that put one in a contemplative, meditative mood. Writers prefer this kind of rest as it is in harmony with their work. Goethe, Gogol, and Cao Xueqin, the author of the classic "The Dream of the Red Chamber," all liked taking walks. "A stroll relieves tiredness, pacifies, invigorates and refreshes you and transports you to some new world without cares," said writer Zou Taofen. Last autumn, though, writers did not have much time for walks, as they had other concerns.

In an interview shortly after the congress of the Chinese Communist Party, authoress Tie Ning said that literature is affected by an unstable political atmosphere. She said she believed that a new harmony would emerge after the 13th Congress, and that the literary scene in China would be invigorated. The young authoress, who comes from Hebei Province, is a writer of the "fourth generation" who started publishing in the 1980s (her first work, which she now regards as immature, was brought out in 1979). She was among the writers elected as delegates to the 13th CPC Congress. Regrettably, the writers' delegation to the congress was not large. Tie Ning herself could give only three other names.

Special case or tendency?

It is not easy to foresee tomorrow's tendencies in literature, the cinema, or television. Everybody hopes for invigoration, however, for it is difficult to live without hope. Meanwhile, asking the man in the street if he was impressed by anything he has read lately often fails to elicit an answer. A young man will knit his brows, lost in thought, and come up with the names of classics - Lu Xin, Mao Dun, or Ding Ling, and look perplexed when the names of Tie Ning, or Wang Anyi, or Liu Suola are mentioned.

Taking too generalized a view could prove wrong, however. There could be exceptions. The following day the author of these lines met by chance a student with an inquisitive mind, who suggested he read Wang Shuo's novel "Rubber Man" and prose by Mo Yan, who is now described as the Chinese Marquez. The student subcribed to the "nihilist" theories of Liu Xiaobo, who was known to proclaim in his dispute with "traditionalists" that "Confucius is dead and Liu Zehou* is growing old...," thereby emphasizing overzealously the rejection of traditional values in the name of the modernization of culture. Any dispute is useful when truth emerges as a result, and this will only happen when vehemence abates and wisdom emerges.

So, patience is called for. The debates on "Xie Jin's model" are in their second year now. Their initial keenness is somewhat less than it was at the time when the young Shanghai critic Zhu Dake was calling for an end to the "latter-day Confucianism" of the films of Xie Jin, who is now regarded as the most prominent master of Chinese cinema. That statement provoked violent reproaches that the critic was about to discard all the genuine achievements of Chinese cinema.... The genuinely scientific analysis that can be seen behind the publicistic excesses of the young critic has not yet matured, but even lecturers at the Peking Cinematography Institute already discuss "Xie Jin's model" with students of the film criticism department. So one would like to hope that the arguments of the participants in the dispute will not sink into oblivion.

There are unassuming writers who have a faithful readership. One such writer is Jia Pingwa, 33, who concentrates on rural themes. "He has a sound knowledge of Chinese realities and reflects our national character," I was told by a man in a queue for Jia Pingwa's autograph. Late in November, Jia Pingwa and another young author, Wang Zhaojun, had a meeting with booklovers in the bookstore Writer. When I squeezed through the crowd to where Jia Pingwa stood, I introduced myself and said I hoped Soviet readers would be able to read his books and that a screen adaptation of his story "Wild mountains" would be shown in the U.S.S.R. next year. I handed him a book to be autographed and he wrote in it in sprawling handwriting: "I learn from Soviet writers. My regards to Soviet readers."

The conversation the writers held following the signing of autographs was about the author-publisher-reader triangle, about relationships with the cinema (Jia Pingwa's latest novel broaches the subject of the reform so acutely that the directors of the Peking film studios hesitate to start filming it, even though the script has already been prepared). There was also talk of how literature helps us understand life.

The fallen maple leaves were still visible through a thin layer of snow. A reminder of autumn. There are certainly other, less transient, things to remember it by.

Interesting, sometimes even remarkable, films have been released for distribution, for instance, "An old well" by a film director from Xian, Wu Tianming. This slowly-paced film (though couched in

*Contemporary Chinese philosopher.

Artist Zheng Changfu showing his work to dramatist Wu Zuguang.

modern cinematic idiom) about how determined peasants dug a well from hard rock, won the Grand Prix at the recent Tokyo film festival. The film portrays the life of the people and reveals the psychology of the Chinese, and to reveal the psychology of people is, perhaps, cinema's most important task. Soviet film director Karen Shakhnazarov expressed this idea when speaking of the film at a press conference in Peking. He was member of the jury of the Tokyo film festival, and recently visited the P.R.C. as head of the Soviet delegation to a week-long festival of Soviet films.

It was somewhat strange to see Igor Kostolevsky and Natalia Belokhvostikova conversing animatedly in Chinese. The festival of Soviet films opened with the film "Marriage of convenience." The films "Scarecrow," "A winter night in Gagra," and "Ruthless romance" were then shown. (By an irony of fate, the original title "The girl without a dowry" was restored by the translators to the latter film, and all Eldar Ryazanov could do was smile ironically). "The battle for Moscow" was then shown. That film, though exceedingly long, was the greatest success with film-goers, possibly because of their traditional interest in battle scenes. But the main thing was, apparently, the film's straightforward documentary-like approach, which is gradually taking hold of Chinese cinema and starting to crowd out traditional "romanticism." But then the director of "Red kaoliang," the screen version of a Mo Yan novel, intends to impart romantic tones and even a certain mysteriousness to the film, as he holds that "life itself is a mystery." In this film Zhang Yimou makes his debut as a director. Zhang Yimou, a cameraman of the "fifth generation" (a 1982 graduate of the Peking Cinematography Institute), rose to prominence in 1985 with the release of the films "Yellow earth" and "One and eight." This camera-work was not just a dutiful recording of life. It helped create the overall colouring of those films. Then he tried acting, despite his colleagues' scepticism ("He is expressive, yes, but he's no actor," film director Zheng Dongtian said of Zhang Yimou), and his performance in the film "An old well" earned him the best actor award at the Tokyo film festival. And now he is directing a film. "I want to try my hand at everything for only thus can one discover what one really is," he told an interviewer.

The main theme

The cognizance of man is not just a fashionable theme. It is the main tendency in the development of literature and art in the P.R.C. in recent years. The film "Visitation of a dead man on the living," which has just been released, is a characteristic example. This is an acutely publicistic film which symbolically represents the efforts of a young man to discover the reason for the indifference of the people around him (nobody stood up for him during a brawl in a bus and he was murdered), the effort to discover if people still have any compassion.

Stage director Zhang Qihung saw above all elements of the theatre of the absurd in the hyperbolic clash of the different "worlds." She intended to place the emphasis on this in staging this play in the theatre Krasny Fakel (Red Torch) in Novosibirsk. (The film is a screen adaptation of a play that aroused controversy here two years ago.) Late in September, shortly before her departure for the U.S.S.R., we had long debates on whether all this is theatre of the absurd, or if it is not still realism, though of a kind more profound than a mere mirroring of events.

Naturally, I was unable to see the production staged by Zhan Qihung in Novosibirsk, but I have heard of its success.

Creative artists not bound to convention are trying to breathe new life into traditional Chinese theatre. However strange it may seem I became aware of this at the exhibition of Zheng Changfu's cycle of drawings "Characters in drama" displayed at the Peking art gallery on Wangfujing Street. The exhibition attracted considerable interest as Zheng Changfu is a versatile phenomenon. Upon graduating from the Peking Cinematography Institute, he has been working as art director on films in Shanghai. But having been captivated since his young days by the vivid, emotional and highly flexible art of jingju (traditional Peking musical drama, which Sergei Eisenstein admired when he saw the performance of the great Mei Lanfang in 1935) Zheng Changfu has been engaged for many years in the effort to express its colourfulness and, most importantly, its inner tension, its explosive force. This fills the very characterization of the drama, which, though dating from the middle ages, became fused with China's present-day life.

Initially masks presented in their frontal view, static and separated from the audience, attract the viewer only by the striking colours - a close-up of an actor's face in conventional makeup. But then one gradually becomes aware of the artist's attempts to break the spell of stillness and make what seems to be a dispassionate mask express itself not only in the language of age-old convention but also of feelings.

And then there are drawings with a swift, contemporary rhythm, executed in rapid strokes. Li Huiniang, the popular heroine of many dramas, swirls her grey-brown drapery as if unable to resist the rhythm of the dance. Rodin-like passion seems to have gripped the interwoven bodies in "Life," a triptych that has no theatrical associations showing as it is that the artist's creativity is not limited to theatre. His creativity is none too frequent example of a case when age-old traditions are linked with elements of contemporary style, when the art of today is enriched by the creative spirit of past epochs.

The once taboo realm

Numerous bookstands in the streets are piled high with books about love (the trade is private, so one comes across inconceivable things). I have not veered from the theme of the cognizance of man, for the mysterious realm of feelings, which does not lend itself to rational clear-cut analysis, has until recently been terra incognita for Chinese art, and life itself, with the endless political "reeducation" campaigns, suspicion and distrust, has taught people to hate rather than love. So the love theme is now imbued not only with artistic but also with socio-philosophical content. Love is involved in the changing psychological makeup of the Chinese, and in art it becomes an important means of immersion in the private life of ordinary people, of tearing off false social masks.

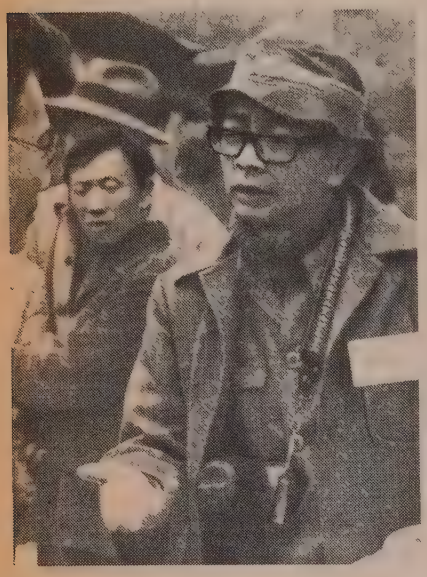
Life is not what lies on the surface, nor is it in beautiful modern interiors of new apartments in highrise buildings. It is in the heart of man. This is what director Zheng Dongtian asserts in his new film "The nest." It won't be released for some time yet (I saw a rough version of the film, where the sound track and film sequences had not been coordinated), but the film has already prompted lively discussions among cinematographers. It consists of six novellas about six young couples whose lives are recorded with documentary meticulousness. In an almost Chekhovian way, deep thought at times underlies a funny story. This is a film about love, the director said. I would prefer to say it is about lack of love, about the fact that no cosy nest in itself can create love. It is a quest for the fount of humanism in man.

Chinese art is ceasing to be one-dimensional, abandoning predetermined schemes and starting to reveal the inner world of man, and express his individuality. In this sense Kongfu films (leaving aside their artistic merit, which is uneven) can also be viewed as a tendency towards freeing film characters of shackling stereotypes of conduct. "Do you have Kongfu films in the U.S.S.R.?" I was asked. "No, we don't have anything of the kind," was my answer. The very idea of such films getting past the strict panel at the state cinematography board makes one feel uncomfortable. But my interlocuters had an amazing breadth of information. "And what about '20th-century pirates'?" Yes, indeed. Incidentally, the film has just appeared at video clubs in Peking and was a success, albeit a moderate one.

How to ensure that a work of art is also a box office attraction? There have been debates on this theme in the press, as well as in official and informal conversations. The recognition of sophisticated film-

goers which Chinese films have started winning of late is clearly not enough, thinks film director Wu Yigong, who was recently appointed head of the Shanghai cinema board. Karen Shakhnazarov expressed the same views at the press conference in Peking. He said that there can be no films without viewers, that even a great work of art should reach people.

While theorists and practical workers hold debates, attendance at cinemas is falling everywhere. True, Eldar Ryazanov said at the same press conference, maybe this is not such a bad thing as it might mean that prosperity is growing and



Film director Wu Yigong.

Photos by author and from the China Screen magazine

people now want more expensive entertainment.

The journalists laughed.

Pugachova's songs and Kamarinskaia dance

I have not seen queues, nor "sold out" signs at box offices in cinemas in Peking, not even when "New Fang Shiyu" was screened. It is a kongfu film with a good measure of excellent strikes with hands and feet. It was no match for Zhang Yunzhao's "Lone avenger" recently shown on TV. Though it was a kongfu film too, that aspect was not too pronounced. And what Shakespearean passions, what a Kurosawan atmosphere! Nevertheless, when foreign films are screened at the film archives on Tuesdays for students and teachers of the Peking Cinematography Institute, young people with ready money usually ask for extra tickets.

Theatres hold greater attraction. Newspaper ads are accompanied by notes: tickets for such and such dates have been sold out, sales of tickets for subsequent dates start at eight in the morning. Newspapers are delivered several hours later, but newspaper ads are actually not needed, and crowds have gathered at box offices by eight. The cream of the Peking intelligentsia gathered for the performance of Bertold Brecht's "The good woman of Setzuan." Those who were able to get tickets through the back door to the box office thought of their friends and acquaintances. Dürrenmatt's "The angel comes to Babylon" played to a packed house. But for a sympathetic elderly usherette who helped me to acquire a ticket with a "gift" mark, I would not have been able to see it.

"And have you seen the Soviet play 'Blue horses on red grass'?Be sure not to miss it," I was advised in November, when the Youth Theatre staged Mikhail Shatrov's play, having invited Mark Zakharov as stage director. The audience burst into applause, responding to hints at events in recent Chinese history (some changes were made in the text with the author's consent) or there was a silence of intense concentration as the audience followed the thoughts and actions of the leader, shown in a way unusual for them, as a modest and democratic man, without the trappings of monumentality.

Emil Braginsky's and Eldar Ryazanov's "Irony of fate," staged in mid-November by the Chinese Drama Workshop, was much enjoyed by audiences. Getting the better of the nervousness of the opening moments, the young actors held dialogues with ease, sang to the accompaniment of the guitar songs of Alla Pugachova and Bulat Okudzhava (naturally, in Chinese). "But why is it that old Russian tunes - 'The steppe all around,' 'Kamarinskaia' - and not modern songs are heard when the lights go down on the stage?" I asked the stage manager, in the wings after the performance. Somewhat embarrassed, he explained that these are symbols of Russia, (just like a church featured on the programme amid highrise buildings, in much the same way as the church on Kalinin Avenue).... These are the clichés in one's notions about a different culture, a fault of which not only the Chinese are guilty.

...The sun rises on another bright day, and the nocturnal frost abates. Morning papers contain news. Prominent writer Liu Xinwu, who was removed from the post of editor-in-chief of the journal People's Literature, has been reinstated. A number of films banned earlier, among them "Wilderness," a screen version of a play by Cao Yu, are to be released on the screens.

It is warmer when the sun shines.

Peking

First, a few words about the author. Unlike the American Philip Agee, who broke with the CIA and dedicated himself to exposing its criminal activity, Peter Wright, a former British counterintelligence officer, did not quarrel with the "company." Having retired peacefully, he decided to write a "candid" book about MI5. Some of its pages are imbued with sincere pride in the "spectacular achievements" of the British counterintelligence service, but for the most part the author criticizes MI5 for inefficiency. Moreover, Wright shares his numerous suspicions with the reader. In his opinion, even Sir Roger Hollis, the one-time MI5 chief, might well have been a Soviet spy... The author is convinced that "spy catching" in Britain lacks both vigour and scope. One has the impression that the ex-counterintelligence officer wrote the book to get even with those of his colleagues who had ridiculed his spymania.

At times, Wright gets carried away by his reminiscences of "fighting Kremlin agents" to the extent of forgetting that the MI5 methods he describes are counter to international law. His excessive frankness proved irksome to the authorities. For all we know, London does not want to create a precedent for others engaged in this sensitive sphere of activity: what if some of them were to follow Wright's example?

There is another reason for the official displeasure. While working in Britain I took the phrase "police state" to be a journalistic metaphor. Now that Wright has afforded me an insight into the mechanism of police surveillance, I see that it is no exaggeration. To judge from the book, the system of spying on the public that operates there is amazingly universal and efficient.

Bugs in embassies

MI5 had long cherished the dream of planting microphones in a Soviet mission in London. An opportunity to do so presented itself in the early 1960s when the Consulate building near Hyde Park was undergoing repairs. Clad in overalls, counterintelligence agents found their way into the house, hand-drilled imperceptible holes through an office wall and embedded a supersensitive microphone. The microphone functioned without a hitch for six months, and was then silent. So they got Agent Squirrel into the Consulate building in the guise of a repair man. He reported that the wall with the bug in it had been given a new coat of paint that covered the holes. Wright was told to sneak into the building at night and drill new ones...

Prime ministers come and go but MI5 goes on forever

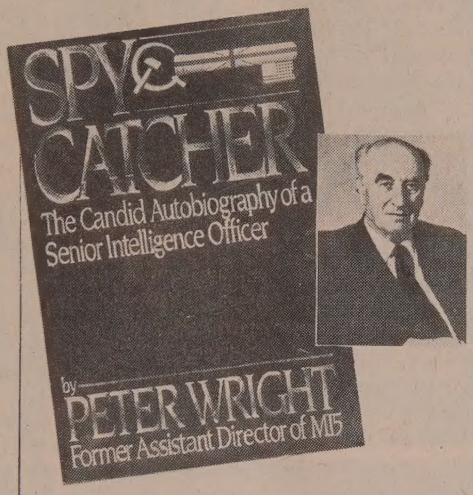
The New Times library has acquired Peter Wright's book, "Spy Catcher," published recently in New York. The book is banned in Britain. What's more, the British authorities have ordered a regular hunt for it. In our issue No. 34 we described the ways in which London is trying to prevent the British from reading it. Now we can give our readers a more detailed account of the best-seller's content.

In 1955 Wright, by then an accomlilshed expert in bug-planting, was sent to Canada to help local colleagues with a job in his line. In Ottawa, where a new Soviet embassy building was under construction, Wright and Terry Guernsey, a Canadian, carried out Operation Satyr: they fitted microphones into window frames and pulled the lead-out wires through a special tunnel all the way to a secret listening post set up by the Canadian counterespionage service.

After that, Wright was sent to Australia on a mission to instal a microphone in the Soviet embassy in Canberra (Operation Mole). Later, he suggested that a buglarded gift be presented to the Soviet Ambassador in Britain. The services of MI5 agents among the MPs who regularly visited the Soviet embassy were enlisted in carrying the operation through.

This is not to say that Peter Wright was always lucky. This Oxford man was once forcibly removed from the roof of the Hungarian embassy in London by police who took him for a burglar. They called in Scotland Yard, and the "spy catcher" got off scot-free.

Diplomats from "unfriendly countries" were not the only ones to be shadowed by the British counterespionage service. During a Commonwealth conference in Lancaster House, Peter Wright was instructed to instal microphones there: his department wanted to know what plans representatives of the former British dominions and colonies were discussing behind closed doors. He proudly recalls how, during the Suez crisis, he achieved "technical penetration" of the Egyptian embassy, and intercepted its exchange of coded messages with Cairo. In the 1960s London had differences with Paris, which did not want the British in the Common Market. MI5 outdid the British Secret



Intelligence Service (MI6) in supplying Whitehall with reliable information from the French embassy in London. According to Wright, General de Gaulle's personal messages to his London representative were "served" to the British Foreign Secretary on the day of receipt in the so-called "red box."

A plot against the Prime Minister

In our stories about the British secret services (see New Times Nos. 34 and 37, 1987) we mentioned a plot against Harold Wilson, who headed two Labour cabinets. Peter Wright confirmed this.

The advent of Harold Wilson's Labour cabinet to office in 1964 was unwelcome to the chiefs of the British secret services. At one time the Prime Minister had been active in a company that did business with Soviet foreign trade organizations. He had visited the U.S.S.R. several times and, consequently, MI5 had kept an eye on him. Now he had supreme authority over the counterintelligence service; he could inquire about any operation and even demand a report on how his own "shadows" were doing.

It was not British counterintelligence officers but their U.S. colleagues who started the conspiracy against Wilson.

James Angleton, chief of the CIA's Counterintelligence Department, arrived in London and handed MI5 "some very secret information" compromising Wilson. Even Peter Wright, then assistant director of the counterintelligence service, had no notion what the information was about. He was certain, though, that the "dope" had been concocted by the Americans. Nevertheless, the MI5 bosses called on the Prime Minister, in accordance with the U.S. scenario - only to be told that all the accusations levelled against him had been faked. The attempt at blackmail had failed.

The British secret services continued to try to smear Wilson. Shortly after Edward Heath's Conservative cabinet came to power in 1970, a close associate of the new Prime Minister introduced a "wealthy industrialist" to Wright. The introductions were made in a restaurant. The "industrialist" offered Wright a job in his company and said he represented a group determined to keep Labour out of office. He was interested in information injurious to Wilson's character, and Wright agreed to supply it.

According to Wright, at least thirty more counterintelligence officers he knew were also prepared to conspire against the Labour leader. The idea was publicly to defame certain members of Harold Wilson's second cabinet and Wilson himself (Cecil King, the publisher of the conservative Daily Mirror, whom Wright referred to as "a longtime agent of ours," was most cooperative), and then attempt to get a vote of no-confidence in Parliament. Since Labour did not have a reliable majority in Parliament, the government was expected to lose. As a result, it would have to resign.

Eventually Wilson learned of the conspiracy to topple him and took countermeasures. The plotters beat a retreat, but, nevertheless, Wilson had to step down shortly. He was replaced by another Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, who admitted at the recent parliamentary hearings into the "spy catcher" affair that the hush-hush men had conspired not only against Wilson, but also against himself. However, he did not touch the omnipotent counterintelligence service either. "Politicians may come and go, but the Security service is forever," they say at MI5.

YURI KUDIMOV

NOT A KINDERGARTEN

VERONICA KHILCHEVSKAYA

Honestly, all I knew about the Sovremennik-II young drama company was that it had a reputation as a children's theatre. I went to see its production of "The Seventh Feat of Heracles" out of shear curiosity, but towards about the middle of Act I curiosity gave way to sincere interest. The play, written by Mikhail Roshchin in the early 1960s, suddenly turned out to be a biting satire on the headaches of our times. But why is the action set in ancient Greece? Why the huge Rubik cube on the stage?

Explains Roman Kheidze, the producer of the play:

"First, the toy symbolizes, to a certain extent, our country and our people, which has never been fathomed. Second, it stands for our system which we are now restructuring, working out complicated combinations in the process.... The production is intended as a joke, a parody on ourselves. It seems to me that anything taken too seriously soon becomes humdrum and commonplace. So why not look at the funnier side of things? It is ourselves, not the drawbacks of our society, that we criticize through our characters. We could well have grown up to become their like. And if the audience feels some of the things we do are no laughing matter, this means we have succeeded in getting our anguish across. We'd like this production to express our idea of life regardless of the admonitions we have received for irreverence in what we do and say. Of course we reject many things outright before we find our own substitutes for them. But the most important thing is, perhaps, that we know where we stand in our times which we, as citizens of our country, are going to discuss frankly and in unorthodox terms."

Roman Kheidze and almost all other members of the company graduated from the Moscow Art Theatre's drama school in 1987, Back in their student years they staged, under the direction of their classmate Mikhail Yefremov, a production called "A Slap in the Face" (after Yuri Olesha's play "A Conspiracy of Feelings" and the novel "Envy" by the same author). This all-student production proved a success.

The drama school students had often thought of forming a company of their own. Naturally, the near-graduates made plans for the future. With young companies mushrooming all around, the Art Theatre school's seniors decided to start one, too.

The idea had been in the air for a long time, waiting to be made a reality. Finally, the Sovremennik-II company came into being last July. "That a youth drama company has emerged within these walls for the first time in thirty years is a great joy, and a great responsibility," says Galina Volchek, the director of the Sovremennik company. "The company's members are not like us - not only as we are now, but even as we were at their age. And that's great! For all our differences, there is something we have in common: namely, the preoccupation with man, his emotions and his problems. The young actors worship psychological theatre 1987-style. The important thing is that the company's leader comes from their own ranks, that all of them are like-minded, and that all of them belong to the same generation. Personally, I like their determination and push. They are how budding actors should be."

Vladimir Yezhakov, the Sovremennik's stage manager, spoke in the same vein. "The youngsters are very active, not to say aggressive. It's fun working with them."

Andrei Yalovich, the stage director of Sovremennik-II, was sceptical at first.

"To me, they were simply students at a prestigious higher school, and I didn't expect them to live up to their ambitions."

The work on their first production, and Mikhail Yefremov's inexhaustible energy, brought the team closer together. The economic experiment the Sovremennik company took part in brought it some cash to spare for its own needs. Be that as it may, the young hopefuls found themselves in the possession of two premises: a theatre seating 83, with a tiny stage of their own making, and a foyer. From April on they would come over almost every evening, sometimes at night. Time was short - the academic year was drawing to a close, they were busy playing their diploma roles and taking their graduation exams. Nevertheless, the young company was already rehearsing its first productions - "The Seventh Feat of Heracles" and "The Theatre Season."

"Frankly speaking," Andrei Yalovich remarked, "famous names were of great help to us at first. It was probably thanks to them that setting the company afloat and surmounting bureaucratic barriers proved less of a problem than usual. But a name means something only for so long. Many were interested in taking a look at Nikita Vysotsky and Masha Yevstigneyeva, or to see how much family likeness there was between Oleg and Mikhail Yefremov. Such an interest is only natural, but we are certainly not doomed to the reputation of a 'kindergarten.' If you are worthless, you won't last long on the stage. The stage will ruthlessly expose you for what you really are, name or no name."

The young and gifted enthusiasts have a great deal to show for their pains. As you watch them act, it is hard to agree with those who regard the new company as a "family preserve," although the "like-father-like-son" question is raised at practically all the company's encounters with the public.

"We can prove that we are actors in our own right only by our work, i.e., by our productions," says Mikhail Yefremov, art director of Sovremennik-II. "Certain critics regard our first production, 'A Slap in the Face,' as a manifest of sorts. I wouldn't call it that. Neither is this true of our subsequent works - 'The Seventh Feat of Heracles' and 'The Theatre Season.' Each of them reveals only a fraction of our creative identity. In any case, it is safe to say that a new company has been born."

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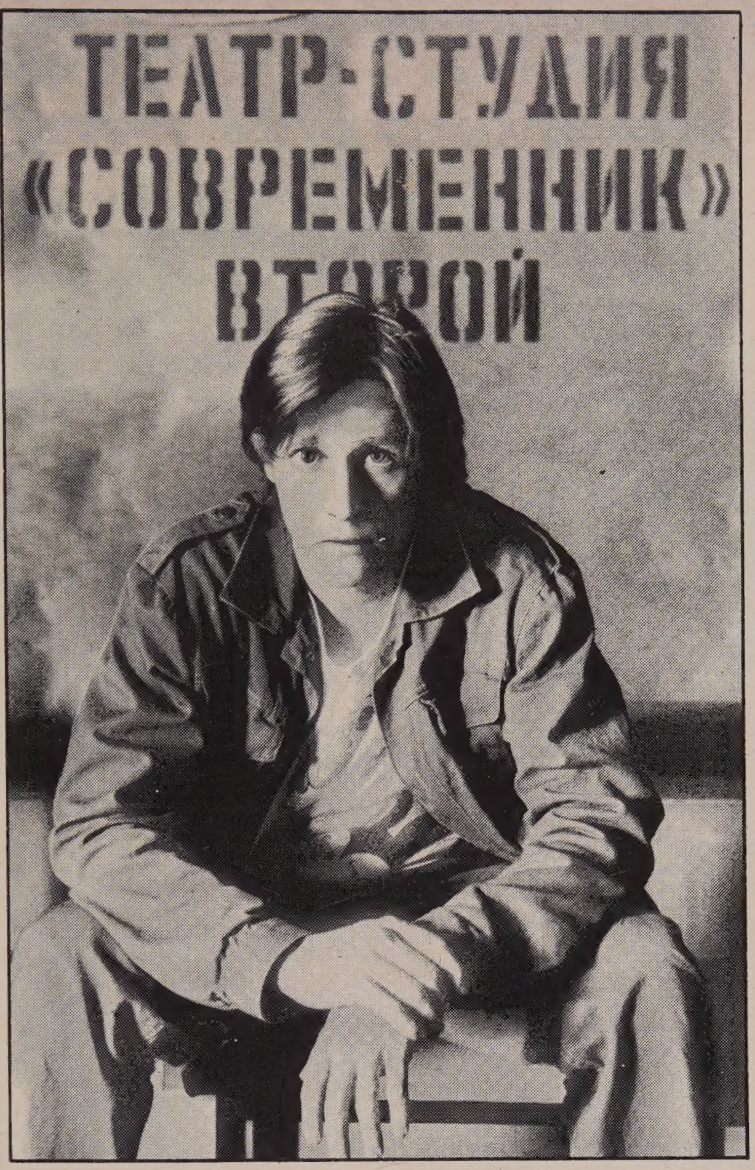
It is only in five years or so, when we have built up a repertoire and a distinctive image all our own, that we shall have the right to say that a new theatre has been born. We have only a very general idea of what we are after, and whether we succeed in attaining it depends not only on us, but on many extraneous circumstances besides. So it's still rather too early to announce a new theatre. Our production of the plays "A Slap in the Face" and "The Seventh Feat of Hercules" are both vivid in form. Experiments in form are just one aspect of our work, however. The play "The Theatre Season" belongs to the psychological genre, which we are not going to give up. We plan to stage Evgeny Shwartz's "Shadow" and Alexander Azarkh's "Our Genealogy." The latter play is by a man condemned in 1938 on slanderous charges and subsequently rehabilitated. Completed in 1978, "Our Genealogy" was handed over to our company by the dramatist's widow. We are getting down to staging Dostoyevsky's novel "The Devils." The dramatization will comprise three productions, each tracing one of the novel's story lines. Pyotr Krotenko, a graduate at the State Institute of Theatre Art (GITIS), is thinking of producing "The Beast Mashka" by Yuri Miroshnichenko, a parody on a



already staged so as to keep them abreast of the latest developments in Soviet life.

The Sovremennik-II cannot yet boast of having found its own identity. The important thing is that it has embarked upon a course of creative experiment along with the rest of us, and that all the characteristic features of our stirring times find their reflection in its work.

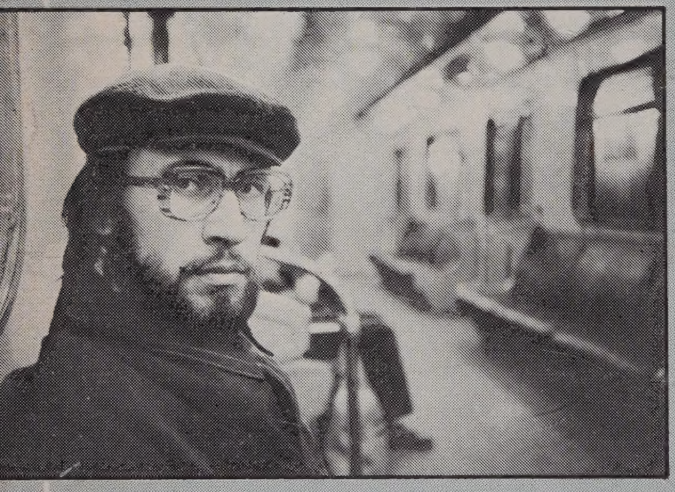
olksy" play. At the same ne, we are tackling Andrei atonov's "Street Organ."

It only remains to add that e Sovremennik-II student eatre's productions go from rength to strength. Our oung company continues to ork on the plays we have

M. Yefremov. An element of decor in the foyer. A scene from the play "A Slap in the Face." After a rehearsal.

Photo by K. Kokoshkin

Flight.



In the Underground.

On a summer's day.

Igor Mukhin (U.S.S.R.)

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

MAN AND MANKIND

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